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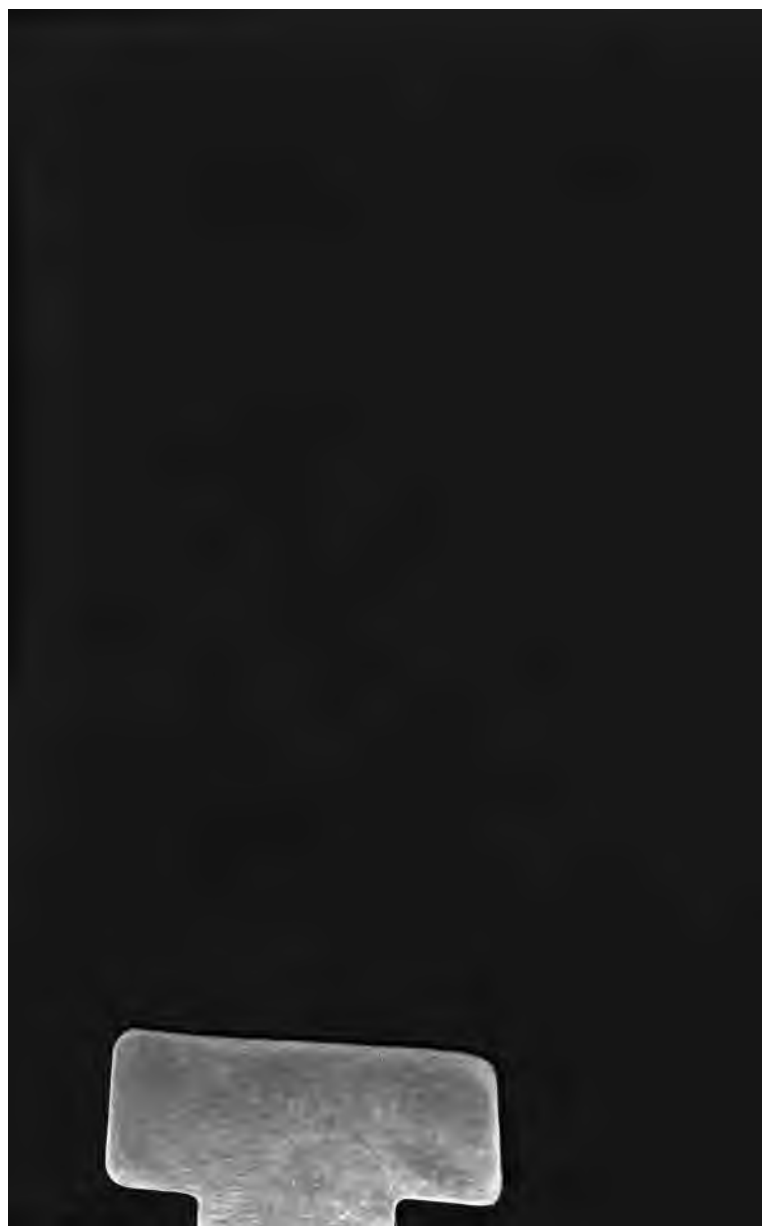
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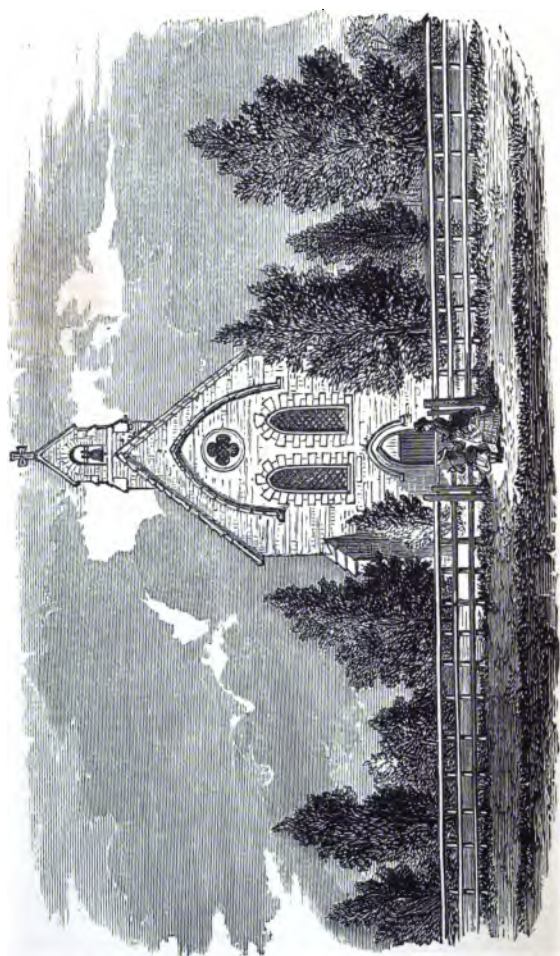












JESSIE GRAINGER.

J. B.

LONDON:  
WILLIAM MACINTOSH,  
24, PATERNOSTER ROW.  
1873.

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# CONTENTS.

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CHAP.	PAGE.
I.—The Town . . . . .	1
II.—A Slight Disagreement . . . . .	5
III.—About the Pic-nic Party . . . . .	12
IV.—Herbert Mortimer . . . . .	25
V.—Mina's Troubles . . . . .	31
VI.—Young Friends . . . . .	39
VII.—Reflecting . . . . .	47
VIII.—The Opinion of Papa and Mamma as to the Ball . . . . .	55
IX.—Jessie and Mina's First Ball . . . . .	63
X.—The Invitation . . . . .	72
XI.—Ballott's Bay . . . . .	81
XII.—Ballott's Bay, <i>continued</i> . . . . .	90
XIII.—Herbert Mortimer's Safety . . . . .	98
XIV.—Jessie and Anna . . . . .	106
XV.—Home . . . . .	115
XVI.—Mrs. Hopley and Mr. Mortimer . . . . .	124
XVII.—Amy Garton . . . . .	131
XVIII.—The Widow's Home . . . . .	137

CHAP.	PAGE.
XIX.—Mina's Return . . . . .	144
XX.—Confirmed . . . . .	153
XXI.—Six months after Confirmation . . . . .	158
XXII.—Miss Garton's Disclosure . . . . .	163
XXIII.—Jessie Practises Forbearance . . . . .	175
XXIV.—Jessie at the Gartons' . . . . .	185
XXV.—Mr. Mortimer's Return . . . . .	193
XXVI.—A Pic-nic at Geneva Fountain . . . . .	203
XXVII.—Sunday in the Forest . . . . .	214
XXVIII.—Married . . . . .	221
XXIX.—Joyous Greetings . . . . .	225
XXX.—An Explanation . . . . .	231
XXXI.—Amy's Illness and Death . . . . .	236
XXXII.—A Long Stroll . . . . .	243
XXXIII.—Mrs. Garton's Communication . . . . .	249
XXXIV.—Farewell to Friends . . . . .	253
XXXV.—Anna's Letter . . . . .	260

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# JESSIE GRAINGER.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE TOWN.

IN 18— George was a small but extremely pretty town, in the western division of South Africa. The Dutch residents far outnumbered the English, and hence it was considered a Dutch town. Situated almost in a hollow, the climate was felt by some to be damp and unhealthy. The long range of mountains, though not remarkably high or majestic, appeared at times beautiful, especially during the months of July and August, when the tops of the highest were covered with snow. The forest, grand and wild, lay at the foot of the Outeniqua mountains, and was one of the greatest attractions of the town. The noble old trees stood erect in their dignified age and strength; while others had been brought down,

bereft of all foliage by the woodmen, who here cut and prepare fuel for the inhabitants. The charming seclusion and quiet, the clear water rippling over the pretty stones from the mountain rivulets, the bright and gaily-coloured flowers in every direction, all tended to make the forest a most agreeable resort for those who come to wander either alone, or in groups, for a joyous picnic party. How easy to describe what is familiar and pleasant! There were the glad bursts of merriment from the assembled party, the frolics and gambols of the light-hearted children, the coloured servants with baskets, parcels, buckets and kettles, all talking their singular *patois*, laughing, wrangling and grumbling among themselves. Then came the search for a place sufficiently sequestered for a fire, and the necessary arrangements for cooking. Well known are the little difficulties of such outings. The open and calm fresh air, the free enjoyment of all—how cheering! As a rule, the Dutch are hospitably inclined, and as the junior members improved in their knowledge of the English language they became more sociable and friendly with them.

The best place for observing the Dutch character is at their own homes: where can be seen the kind-hearted and generous sympathy with each other, and the free distribution of their favourite beverage,

coffee, which is at all hours of the day and night welcome, and ready to be served with "caskies" and sometimes preserved fruits. The houses usually have but one floor, and in many cases these are not even planked. The roofs are usually thatched with reeds; but latterly, several superior houses have been erected. In front of many of them are large flower gardens; the hedges enclosing them are frequently of rose bushes, from three to four feet high. There are often large gardens at the back of the houses, in which grow vegetables of all kinds, and trees yielding abundance of peaches, apricots, plums, pears and figs. In their season, oranges and lemons, delicious juicy grapes, are often brought from the Lange Kloof district, and the waggons are soon surrounded by eager purchasers, who go away heavily laden with fruit in dishes, bags or baskets, to gratify the anxious children, and more patient but equally pleased adults. Fruit was ever a welcome offering to the former, who rarely care for more substantial diet. The blackberries also, what scrambling and screaming at the sight of large bushes bearing this favourite fruit!—and what numbers of lingering, tired feet reach home at dusk, just in time for tea, with blackened faces and soiled pinafores! The chief drawback, however, to the comfort of the people in George, is the water. It



is of a reddish colour, and harsh to the taste. It flows past the foot-way, down each side of the principal streets of the town in channels, and is considered to be very unwholesome to drink, unless filtered or boiled, and then strained.

This chapter shall be brief. By degrees, as they occur, each particular view or attraction shall be noted. The various characters will unfold themselves to the reader, as he or she proceeds with the story. I will merely mention, that my heroine is young, and that her disposition is not formed, though she possesses many attractions, personal as well as mental. She is a beloved and only child. They who peruse this tale will observe, it is hoped, how superior are the advantages of a real Christian life and conduct in the young; how much easier and better are the daily and hourly troubles of our mundane existence endured, and duties fulfilled, by drawing near to and relying upon God in the hour of need.

Through the many paths of difficulty in which Jessie and some of her friends found themselves placed, they each at last from experience could say, that to walk with God in holiness, and to follow Jesus, was truly the Christian's highest interest. But Jessie and her friends may now speak by their words and actions.

## CHAPTER II.

## A SLIGHT DISAGREEMENT.

“WELL, good night again, dear Jessie !”  
“Good night. Recollect, Herbert, that we intend to start at seven to-morrow morning, and we shall expect you here in time to go with us at seven precisely.”

Thus authoritatively spake the fair girl Jessie to Herbert Mortimer, her betrothed, who replied rather sharply,

“And, Jessie, supposing that I should be detained a minute or more beyond the time you mention? You forget that I shall have many things to do at the store.”

“Tush, Herbert! if you care to please me you will come. I know you have often stopped an hour, when you said you would only be a minute !”

“Jessie, do not be so hasty; only urgent business has detained me, and that only would ever keep me from your company.”

“Indeed, Herbert, I am tired of hearing about *business*. Can you never put off business, even to please me?” Saying which, and without waiting

for a reply, the young girl vanished quickly indoors, without deigning another look.

Herbert Mortimer was sad for an instant, and then muttered as he walked hastily homeward, "Oh, Jessie, it is no wonder that you are so very exacting, you are so beautiful and accomplished! so wealthy and so much admired! Am I right in fancying that you are selfish and domineering? You are aware that I am not yet my own master." Herbert compressed his lips at the word, "Master," and then indulged in a long reverie, until he reached his home.

Mr. Louis Grainger, Jessie's father, was one of the richest merchants in George. He and his aimable wife were cheerful pleasure-loving people: consequently, all amusements started by them met with general approval, for it was well known how liberal and open-hearted they were upon such occasions. The pic-nic party which was to assemble on the morrow, had prepared for and expected much enjoyment.

Jessie Grainger, the only child, was, as may be surmised, the pride and joy of her parents. She had never been to school, but always had a superior Governess at home; and the last few years her education had been under the guidance of a widow lady, Mrs. Lawson. She had passed through

much trial, and her quiet gentle manners procured for her everywhere the greatest and kindest consideration. She received a handsome salary, and had a happy house at the Graingers', and they never regretted her advent at their abode.

The evening after parting so abruptly from Herbert, Jessie was decidedly restless and out of temper, a rather unusual occurrence with her. Her manners attracted the attention of her mother, as she was carelessly pulling the tassel of the blind, and gazing anxiously out of the window, though it was then eight o'clock, and nearly dark.

"Jessie, darling!" exclaimed Mrs. Grainger; but not receiving an answer, she watched her daughter a few seconds, and then in a louder voice again called her; but no answer came from that young lady, until her mother advanced and touched her shoulder, saying, "My dear Jessie, I have called you twice—what is the matter? why do you look so sad?"

Jessie started, and immediately replied, "Oh, mamma dear, I am so sorry I did not hear you; what can I do for you?"

"Take this holland to Mrs. Lawson, and tell her I have no better quality for the bag. Then come back, dear; I want you to help me with a few things for to-morrow's use."

Jessie soon returned, her face being still unusually clouded, her mother again remarked, as they proceeded with sundry little arrangements,

“Why do you look sad this evening, dear?”

Jessie blushed, and replied gravely, “A little while ago I was rather vexed, but shall feel happier and brighter too when papa comes in.”

Mrs. Grainger remarked, “I hope so; I do not understand your face, it is so pale and quiet. Now you may go to the piano, and amuse yourself; papa will be glad to hear you singing as he comes along the path. I must go away now, and get something for the servants to do.”

Mrs. Grainger left the room, and her daughter walked slowly in another direction,—indulging rather unpleasant thoughts. They were somewhat in this strain :

“Herbert’s conduct is at times most provoking. I do not like to trouble mamma with our disagreements; still, I feel very much annoyed with him. He seems determined not to please me by starting with us to-morrow. It would be so pleasant to have him riding by and close to our cart. I am sure Mr. Hopley, who is very indulgent, and gives Herbert every thing as though he were his own son, would not place any hindrance in his way. It is just like Herbert, business—business—business,

every thing must give way to business, as he has often remarked. Well, papa thinks it is quite right, but *I think* it is very, *very* provoking! I meant to show Herbert that I can be cool and indifferent to him, if he can find such plausible excuses for absenting himself from me!" Jessie looked very indignant, and walked to the piano with a piece of music. Soon after, the sound of footsteps reached her ears, and then her papa's voice was heard by her with evident delight, for she turned and met him with a brilliant smile. He quickly said, as she leaned on his arm :

"Well, dear, are you quite ready for to-morrow's enjoyment? Mortimer is, I suppose, too busy to stay this evening."

"Yes, I think mamma is still arranging things, so she asked me to play and sing to you."

"Indeed, very well, I am quite ready. Your voice sounds weary or weak, my child; are you quite well, dear?" inquired her father anxiously.

"Yes, papa, but I feel rather tired."

"What have you been about all day, helping mamma to get ready the good things for the pic-nic to-morrow?"

"I have not done much, papa."

"Well, what have you been doing, entertaining visitors, eh, dear?"

"Yes, a few. Then Bertie and I went out for a stroll over the bridge. Has not the weather been delightful? I hope, papa, that we shall have such calm weather again to-morrow."

"I trust so, dear; but where are the songs and the music that were to delight my ears? Come, let me hand you to the piano; it is getting late, my child."

Although Jessie was brighter and happier with her papa, as she had said she would be, still, the thought of Herbert, and what he would say, when next they met, haunted her. She was not wont to express herself so angrily as she had done that evening to him, and she could not feel quite happy, knowing that she had been over-bearing and hasty; yet she concluded she had done right in showing him that she would not be second in his thoughts, and that he ought to be well pleased by her evincing astonishment at his anxiety about business when she desired his presence. It will be perceived that Jessie Grainger was accustomed to consider herself of some importance; and, though generally amiable, her sweetness of temper was soon ruffled by the slightest unintentional neglect, or fancied indifference. She was considered thoroughly perfect by most of her friends, especially by her fond and indulgent parents, and

might in time have become quite spoiled, had not religion been shown to her as possessing more beauty and substance than she had supposed possible. Then, though she found to act rightly always was very difficult, she determined to persevere, and as will be shown, she conquered her failings and shortcomings by degrees, through an earnest desire to become a Christian in deed and in truth. Jessie retired that night quite perplexed and undecided, as to the best way of making Herbert more devoted to her wishes for the future. Coolness, at all events, should be his reward on the morrow.



## CHAPTER III.

## ABOUT THE PICNIC PARTY.

ALL having been arranged with admirable order, there was no necessity for delay; therefore, at a few minutes past seven, on Tuesday morning, the company were arriving in genial health and spirits. Mr. and Mrs. Grainger were bowing and smiling to the occupants of the various vehicles as they drew near and went on. All passed but the Gartons.

"Well, I suppose," said Mr. Grainger, "they will follow with Mortimer some time to-day; now, wife, now Mrs. Lawson—all right, eh? Why Jessie, Jessie, where are *you*?"

"Here I am, papa, please wait one moment." Jessie was eagerly whispering to a pretty dark-eyed girl, her own particular friend, who smiled and blushed with evident delight at each word addressed to her.

"Come, Jessie, come dear."

"Here I am, papa, I have not kept you very long," she merrily added, as they took their seats.

"You know, papa, the gentlemen will wait for *ever*, if only we ask them so to do."

"You saucy child," answered the fond father, regarding his blooming daughter with pride and amusement. Then, glancing round to see if the ladies were comfortable, he called to the driver,—  
"Now, away with you, Hans. What a splendid morning! we shall have a beautiful day, ladies."

"Yes; and, Louis, pray remind Hans to be very careful when going down the hills."

"Very good, wife. You are not timid, I hope, ladies?"

"I always am, Louis, when in a cart."

"Mamma," said Jessie, in a low voice, "I suppose Herbert could not obtain leave to come with us."

"He came dear, but he left again suddenly; he will, perhaps, soon overtake us."

Jessie thought to herself, what could Herbert mean by coming to the house, and not starting with us—the sleep of the previous night awoke much, if not all, Jessie's anger. She was now more than astonished to hear that Herbert had not even asked after her,—too unkind, she thought.

Mr. Grainger was chatting pleasantly with his wife, but upon glancing round he noticed the grave countenance of his daughter, and instantly

observed, "My dear Jessie, why this silence? you are not hurt because Herbert omitted to greet you ere he went back? He told me he would soon overtake us; I wonder he has not yet done so. By-the-bye, he went to Hopley's for his flute; so, cheer up!"

"Perhaps, Louis," said Mrs. Grainger, "he is again detained by extra waggon's arriving, and feels bound to stay and assist."

"Probably, wife, your supposition will prove to be correct. Herbert is a good fellow, he never shirks business. I quite agree with you, that he is well rewarding his friends for all that they have done for him."

"Papa, is he always to give up pleasure and comfort for the sake of business?" asked Jessie, in an anxious tone.

"Well, darling, I can't say. But how is he to get all he wants for his happiness, if he does not work hard and perseveringly for many years?"

"Papa, who is coming? I hear a sound of horses cantering: do look."

"Nobody we care for, dear. Yes, it is young Garton. Where are the other members of your party?"

"Coming on in a cart, sir,—Anna, Amy, and the others."

"All well, Garton?" inquired Mr. Grainger.

"Yes, thanks, and taking in as much as possible of this delicious fresh air."

"Miss Grainger, you look as though you would prefer a gallop on your pony, to sitting in a covered cart; it is like hiding away, for I can see only a little bit of you."

Albert Garton laughed heartily, and so did the ladies. The cheerful voice and quaint sayings of this young gentleman soon brought smiles into Jessie's hitherto grave face. He was a general favourite, this long-limbed, light-hearted and active Albert Garton, the eldest son of a large family of boys and girls, and their most cherished son and brother. He was one of the stamp called by young ladies (perhaps by elderly ones also) "a nice man." Gallant and attentive to all, he deserved the respect and regard in which he was held, for he was honest, with a frank smile for all. The presence of Albert Garton relieved Jessie from her very uncomfortable thoughts, and gradually dissipated the *ennui* which was oppressing her. The distance from town to the cove was almost too great for some persons' pleasure; the road was in some parts dangerously steep, and caused much excitement to the most timid of the party. "Dutton's Cove" had not, I think, any

particular charm save the sea, and even that is not a pleasure to every one. The owners had entertained great hope of making the place navigable, but after expending a large sum of money on roads, etc., it was found necessary to cease further operations for some time, and it subsequently proved a great failure.

Mossel Bay, the nearest port, was so very much more distant from George than Dutton's Cove, that hopes were at one time very high in favour of persuading captains of vessels to bring round their ships laden with merchandize for George to the Cove; but it was found impracticable, and the disappointment was great to all concerned.

But the carts are arriving, and the drivers pulling up—the gentlemen carefully assisting their fair friends to alight. The joyous peals of merriment, and the sound of many voices in different cadences, intermingled with harsh words to the animals, gave life and animation to the place. There was wandering hither and thither by several of the party, who appeared bewildered, and not quite sure whither to go or what to do, while Jessie and three young ladies sauntered off to the path leading downhill to the beach. They were in a few minutes followed by Albert Garton, and a young lawyer, a stranger to the place, Mr.

Benjamin Dousin, who was reputed clever—handsome, he certainly was not.

“Young ladies, pray be careful, don’t be too brave.”

“Oh, Mr. Garton, I am so glad to see you: it is dangerous walking down here unaided, I think, is it not?”

“Yes, indeed; pray allow me to assist, by lending the support of my arm—take care, Miss Rollach.”

“Now I am not afraid, because you lead me so nicely.”

Mr. Dousin was guiding Jessie and little Miss Freer, while Miss Beyers walked with one arm linked in Jessie’s.

“We must separate here, Mr. Dousin,” observed Jessie, “I will walk on before you with Miss Beyers, so that you can watch our descent, and prevent danger.”

The two girls proceeded rather quickly. Mina was surprised to hear her friend laughing softly, and she said inquiringly, “Dear Jessie, what is it?”

“What is it? why, I have just escaped from such a danger, Mina.”

“What danger?” asked Miss Beyers in much perplexity.

“Oh, you can’t think what a predicament I

was in when Mr. Dousin offered his arm to me : have you never remarked that his eyes flash vivid lightning at me ? ”

“ No, indeed. What do you mean, Jessie ? ”

“ Never mind now. Take care, Mina. ”

“ Why, Mr. Garton, how have you contrived to get before us ? ”

Mr. Garton answered, smilingly, “ I wish you to fall upon or against me, if you mean to do any thing in the way of tumbling, so I left Miss Rollach under Mr. Dousin’s protection. ”

After reaching the beach, and running about for some time, the gentlemen remarked that they would do well to return to the rest of the party, who would no doubt be waiting breakfast for them. They accordingly ascended the hill with keen appetites.

“ Well, what are we going to do now ? ” This question was addressed by Albert Garton to a group of young ladies standing near, and after all had partaken of a hearty breakfast.

Quite undecided were most of them as he waited an answer, until bright little Carrie Freer said, smilingly, “ Oh, Mr. Garton, why, chat and laugh, laugh and chat. ”

“ Certainly, Miss Freer, pleasant enough ; but I want a couple of ladies to join me in an

expedition round yonder grand reck. Will you be one, Miss Grainger?"

"I should not like to venture, unless papa goes, he is so afraid of my reckless disposition."

"I will tell him, so be here instanter, Miss Jessie."

Away bounded long-limbed supple-jointed Albert, returning in a marvellously short time, exclaiming,

"All right: Mr. Grainger is quite willing to leave you in my care. By-the-bye, where's Mortimer?"

A puzzled look on Garton's face called up a passing blush of mortification in Jessie's cheeks, and she frowned slightly. The others stared, first at Garton, then at Jessie; some smiled, as she thought, most provokingly. Garton did not seem in any hurry to talk to Jessie; he offered his arm to her without looking in her face, and turned to Miss Beyers to request that she would accompany them.

"Are you not coming with us, Carrie?" asked Jessie.

"No, I really am too tired, so don't wait for me."

Little Miss Freer averted her eyes, and turned away.

The trio then walked off, leaving Mr. Dousin to entertain Miss Rollach and Miss Freer. The



former turning to Mr. Dousin said, in a sarcastic tone, "What a flirt Miss Grainger is!"

"Indeed, I thought she looked such a sweet innocent girl, quite free from such an expression!"

"She is doing her best to win Mr. Garton's affections."

"Bella, why do you say that? she is engaged to Herbert Mortimer."

"Nonsense, Carrie; why is he absent to-day if that affair is not broken off?"

"Bella, I saw Jessie out yesterday with Mr. Mortimer."

"Pray defend her conduct if you love her. I daresay she is angelic!" replied Miss Rollach haughtily.

"Why are young ladies so severe upon each other?" asked Mr. Dousin, while a smile upon his face shewed too plainly that he was amused. Miss Rollach merely remarked, that time would prove whether Jessie Grainger were really so perfect a being as some persons considered her.

It was nearly three o'clock in the afternoon when Herbert Mortimer arrived at the place of rendezvous. He had evidently ridden hard, and appeared flushed and excited. Springing quickly from his horse, he walked up to Jessie, who was seated on a hillock with her back to him, tying

together some pretty wild flowers. She started up and proudly exclaimed, "Herbert!"

"Jessie, did you not receive a note which I sent by Jan this morning?"

"No, and I must remark that you——"

"Hush, wait just one moment while I find out who has possession of that note."

Mr. Mortimer returned before Jessie had time to understand her own feelings, and he handed a note to her with the words, "Jessie, will you read this? I am not going far off." Jessie coloured very much as she thus read,—

"My dear Jessie,—I saw you at the door, and waived my handkerchief, for I did not wish to alight until I had procured my flute; but as ill-luck would have it, I was met by a man from the store with a request that I would return immediately. I shall be obliged to remain away from you part of the day. Hoping you will soon receive this, I conclude in haste, dear Jessie,—Your attached, H. Mortimer."

"Why did I not receive this before Bertie came?—Whose fault can it be?" she exclaimed, in an agitated tone. She sprang up and ran lightly in the direction she had seen Mr. Mortimer walk. Perceiving that he was going down a steep grassy hill, she, forgetting prudence, followed,

calling "Herbert," several times. At last he turned, calling loudly and peremptorily, "Stop, Jessie, stop there, I will soon be near you." But Jessie found stopping no easy matter, and grew pale as she contemplated a fall; her dress was caught by her feet, and Jessie fell forward just as Mr. Mortimer reached her.

"Jessie," he said, much agitated, "how could you venture so far, and at such a pace?"

"I did not think, I forgot everything in my eagerness to speak: you are not very angry, Bertie?"

"No; are you sure that you are not hurt, dear Jessie?"

"Only frightened, Herbert—don't be anxious."

Mr. Mortimer and Jessie were pale and excited; she was trembling excessively as she leaned against him.

"Are you better now?" quietly asked Mr. Mortimer.

Instead of a reply, he heard her sobbing hysterically.

"Don't, Jessie, don't give way thus, the danger is over."

"O! Herbert, I felt almost delirious after reading your note."

"I do not mean to be the cause of any trouble

or sorrow to you, Jessie,—have you ever thought that you might be happier if our engagement were at an end? I can try to be content—to give up what I have so longed to possess, provided you are happy. Tell me, Jessie. I am working hard, partly for my own sake, partly out of gratitude to my generous benefactor. But let me say it for *once*, you never seem to consider that my duty must on no account be neglected, even for the great delight of being with you:—well, Jessie?”

Jessie's face wore a look of keen disappointment and distress, as she clung to Mr. Mortimer, exclaiming sadly,—

“I must indeed have been very unkind to cause you to speak in this way, but try me again Bertie; I am perhaps spoilt with too much love and care. Try me again.”

“Only too willingly, Jessie, dear.”

“Herbert, do you think you could bear to do as you said?”

“What, give up my dear Jessie, only to make her glad?”

“I don't like to hear you speak so coldly, Bertie.”

“Then you really only try me, darling Jessie: you will not any longer *doubt* that my duty alone keeps me away from you?”

“I suppose I expect too much from you.”

"I could not do too much for you, Jessie. Now dear, we don't mean to misunderstand each other again. Let us think of some other subject which will bring smiles to our faces, before the world looks at us. Oh! Jessie, I wish two years would slip away. I think I should then be rich enough to please myself, and to wed you."

"Why, Herbert, you are growing moderate."

"It is your turn to laugh at me, eh! Jessie? Do you not think that we should both be the better for some shelter? Let us try."

When all the company was prepared to start for home, the sun was declining, for it was nearly seven o'clock. All declared that a calm and delightfully pleasant day had been spent at Dutton's Cove. Notwithstanding Jessie's little trouble, she was herself again, though a trifle more quiet than usual. Herbert's face as he rode homeward was also grave, but glad smiles came for Jessie; and the first serious disagreement produced no bad effects to the engaged ones.

## CHAPTER IV.

## HERBERT MORTIMER.

**H**ERBERT MORTIMER was the youngest and only surviving son of Captain Mortimer, of Croydon, England. At the time of his parents' deaths, (which occurred within six months of each other), he was eleven years old. His parents were greatly attached to Mr. and Mrs. Hopley, with whom they kept up a pleasant correspondence; and they earnestly requested that at their decease these kind friends would adopt their only darling child, and remove him to their residence in South Africa. These good persons readily acquiesced, and promised that the youth should be as dear to them as if he were their own son. Not long after this request the father died, and only six months elapsed when Mrs. Mortimer followed him; and then, arrangements having been made by Mr. Hopley for Herbert's education, he remained in England until he was seventeen, when he was requested by Mr. Hopley to decide upon his future course. He almost immediately wrote, expressing

his deep gratitude, and earnest desire for a removal to the home of his own and his parent's generous friends. He expressed also a sincere and anxious wish to be taken into the business in which Mr. Hopley was engaged, promising at the same time to exert the utmost energy of his mind and body, in all duties or transactions which he might be permitted to undertake. This letter from Herbert Mortimer gave immense satisfaction to Mr. Hopley, for, as years passed by and age came on, he felt the need of a younger and more active person on whom he could perfectly rely; and he thought Herbert would unquestionably be the man. The letter gave pleasure also to the kind and benevolent Mrs. Hopley, who had long looked forward to seeing and tenderly greeting the son of her deceased friends. To say that they were pleased is not enough to express the joy they felt at the sight of Herbert's fine expressive face, and simple gentlemanly behaviour, as he warmly and eagerly greeted his guardians; and the free and unaffected manner in which he begged to be allowed to address them as uncle and aunt. They gladly consented to this, and declared that his presence with, and his most affectionate conduct towards them, lent an additional charm to his appearance in their quiet home. As they grew familiar with

their adopted nephew, they never seemed to imagine that he needed encouragement to do right—or restraint to keep him from self-indulgence or pride. On all occasions they relied upon his superior education being sufficient to assist him. His pride and self-conceit grew accordingly, and as his guardian took him into partnership, his ambition aspired still higher.

Herbert had resolved, on coming to Africa, that he would work and grow rich, give very little time to amusement and recreation,—in fact, be a miser with regard to money, until he could say with delight, “I am rich.” His dreams and hopes seemed in every way likely to be realised. To add to his content, no praise was denied him.

When Herbert first arrived in George, he was disinclined to make many acquaintances, and for a few years limited the number of them ; but he gradually became very popular, and invitations were constantly drawing him away from his self-imposed seclusion. Then came across his path the beautiful Jessie Grainger ; and the young gentleman gazed into the future, and was at last reluctantly compelled to own that *riches* only could not make him perfectly happy. His next step was to try and produce a similar feeling of affection in the mind of Jessie Grainger, who had been the cause



of his awaking, as it were, from a dream about growing rich, to a certainty of incomplete satisfaction when obtained, unless she would consent to share it with him. The two young persons grew in time to have similar feelings, as has no doubt been observed. No objection to their union was raised by her parents or his guardians. Herbert's industry and steady perseverance never relaxed, and his desire for wealth again increased as he meditated upon being the betrothed of the wealthy Mr. Grainger's only child.

Herbert and Jessie had been engaged about three months when this tale commenced, and though at first each thought the other perfect and charming society, even though they now and then disagreed about trifles, the first quarrel they had had took place the evening before the picnic. Herbert often felt that Jessie was too exacting, and he found one day that there had been an unsuspected listener to a conversation between himself and Jessie, in the person of Tom Purley, with whom Herbert cared not to associate, for he was a sly fellow and a mischief-maker. Herbert was very much vexed at the time, and as the two men walked on together, Purley remarked, satirically,

"I say, Mortimer, how meekly you bore that blue-eyed damsel's reproaches! By the powers, *I* would not!"

"P'shaw, Tom," interrupted Herbert, "it really was my own fault, you know."

"Ah, I daresay, possibly so. Nevertheless and notwithstanding, I advise you to get the upperhand before it be too late."

"Why Tom, what nonsense; do you think any girl could get the upperhand of me?"

"My dear fellow, I hear you are engaged to marry Miss Grainger, so of course I,—but listen here—I mean to marry a girl whose nature will be humble and submissive; beauty's all very well, but a vicious girl won't do for me. The thing is, how often are you going to stand such a rowing? I vow I could not, and what's more, I *would* not." Nodding to Herbert, and with a keen glance from his light eyes, Purley passed, leaving Herbert to ponder on the very superior advice tendered to him.

Herbert resolved, after the conversation with Jessie at Dutton's Cove, that he would, as Tom Purley had suggested, get and keep the upper hand in all future intercourse with the little imperative Jessie, for, as he sat musing in his room one evening, he recollected having heard Jessie express sorrow, and for the first time had seen her shed tears at her want of consideration for him; so of course he thought she must be very tender-hearted and yielding. If only he showed his superior

wisdom, and quietly convinced her of wanting in perception, all would be well; and so it appeared for some time after.

Jessie was more humbled and dismayed than she could have imagined herself to have been at the termination of her *contre-temps*, she was so accustomed to be petted, and not to have her failings pointed out to her, that she felt quite bewildered at the certainty that Herbert was the ill-used person, and not herself; and although convinced of the fact, she was quite unprepared to act the good, unselfish, patient girl. Herbert will be mistaken, if he conjectures that Jessie will be willing to submit entirely to his dictation. There are no doubt some young ladies whose natures can be easily moulded to please the "lords of the creation," though surely in most cases there is no honour due to the victor. Some women have good powers of reasoning, particularly those who possess cultivated religious minds, and have gathered firmness therefrom. They are not mere automatons. No female is loved if she be a simpleton, nor can she be respected if only caring to be admired for her personal attractions. Such persons are objects of commiseration rather than of love, though full of sentiment and affectation.

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## CHAPTER V.

## MINA'S TROUBLES.

JESSIE GRAINGER had gone to pass a few hours with Mina Beyers, whom she found looking very pale and sad. The large front sitting-room was the presentable apartment, as is the custom with the Dutch. The plain wood cane-seated chairs, close against the wall all round the room, —the uncarpeted, though polished floor,—the air of scrupulous neatness and order, caused Jessie to say to herself, "All in such precise primness, as if nothing was ever to be touched or moved." Mina was in a small room, adjoining this apartment, when Jessie entered, and she remarked anxiously,

"Mina, dear, do put away those socks, and let us have a nice long chat, while we wander about in the garden, pray do."

"I cannot, dear Jessie, I have to finish these this evening. Mamma is ill to-day, and I have so much other work to do. Please sit down."

"What has caused your mamma's illness?"

"She frets—about papa, you know."

Jessie silently contemplated her friend's busy fingers for a minute, and then said, though with an effort,—

“Give me a needle, and I will help you to finish.”

“Oh! no, my dear friend, I am sure you do not like darning—your mamma might be angry—don't think of such a thing.”

But Jessie was determined to assist, and soon the weary look passed away from Mina's bright face as she saw how rapidly the socks that required mending decreased in number. It was nearly dusk when the young girls had come to an end of their work; and, though entreated to stay and partake of a cup of coffee, Jessie declined, and the girls walked together to the gate, and after a few words they parted most affectionately.

Jessie had not gone far, ere she was overtaken by Herbert, who exclaimed in tones of surprise and pleasure, “You truant; why, Jessie, your mamma was about to despatch the town crier, or *me*, I think it was, after you! I volunteered.”

Jessie laughed, and explained the cause of her long stay.

“But that is too good of you, *ma cherè* Jessie, spoiling your afternoon walk, and this is the second time.”

“I am so very sorry for Mina!”

"Did you inquire about her father, Jessie?"

"Yes, he is going 'op toyt' again in a week. He used to be a very respectable man: is not the change lamentable?"

"Yes, indeed it is; but now for a more agreeable subject."

"Op toyt," usually means the packing together of sundry articles of merchandize, and preparing for a long trip behind the mountains; where the owner of the goods expected a better price for his articles among the boors, who seldom visited the town. "Op toyt," was therefore among the Dutch population a very customary answer to the question, "Where is your father?"

It was an anxious time for the wife and family of the trader; and of course, the announcement of ill-success on his return, after an absence of two or three months, filled the house with gloom instead of joy. Poor Mina's father had been bitterly disappointed at the result of his last trip. Having a large family, and several bills coming in, the poor man had been driven nearly beside himself; and latterly, to add to the family troubles, he had been drinking to excess, and was often on the verge of that frightful disease, "Delirium Tremens."

Mina had been practising her music lesson one morning at the Graingers', and was afterwards

requested by Jessie to remain and partake of lunch. As Mina sat in rather mournful silence, Mrs. Lawson, who was much attached to the young girl, observed that her cheerful face was clouded. Hearing the half-stifled sigh, she inquired if anything unusual had occurred to give so sad a shade to her countenance. Mina instantly brightened up and said, "Oh! Mrs. Lawson, you will say I am very naughty, so I do not like to tell of what I was thinking."

"I am sure, dear Mina, you are never *very* naughty—what troubled you just now?"

"I was wishing my home were as bright as this, and that we were all as free from care as are dear Jessie and her parents."

Mrs. Lawson looked gravely, but kindly, as the youthful face clouded over again; gently taking her hand, Mrs. Lawson said in a subdued tone, "Do you not remember, Mina, who it is that gives as well as withholds blessings?"

Mina hung her head at this rebuke, and then said quietly,—

"I don't want these beautiful things—but I get tired when I think we may always be as we are now."

Tears filled Mina's eyes, as she hesitated in answering, and her voice was choked. Just then,

Jessie entered with a basket of roses, which she had been culling, and her quick eyes detecting something amiss in her little friend, she immediately walked up to her, saying,

"Mina, don't look so sad!" and putting her arms round her, Jessie said,

"I picked these beauties to make a bouquet for us. Come, I will not let you look dull; choose some of these flowers, and make a bouquet for me, and I will arrange one for you."

Under these bright looks and words, Mina soon recovered her wonted animation, and in a short time, merry laughs were resounding from both girls; proving, that sorrow cannot long exist in the hearts of the young and healthy. It is well that it should be so, for nothing would be more unnatural than that youth should be clouded with griefs and troubles.

There are some persons—very few it is to be hoped—who go through life, as it were, under a cloud; who cannot discern the bright dew-drops dispersed abroad and around their paths in life; they are beings who call forth our compassion, to be treated as hypochondriacs; their bringing up has probably had much to do with such characters. What must their childhood have been? Was there no kind hand to direct them in search of the



glorious beauties and wonders of this earth—no gentle voice to win them from sorrow to visions of future bliss and peace, by following in patience and hope the footsteps of Him, who, though a man of sorrows, went about doing good to the souls and bodies of men ?

Mina does not often look on the dark side of life, for she has a hopeful nature, and troubles as yet lie on the surface, excepting the misery which was caused by her father's misfortune and conduct. Mina Beyers was only fifteen years old, yet she was a most comforting and industrious girl; she exerted all her energies of mind and body to avert the crisis dreaded by them all. Mina's education had been English, and in that tongue were nearly all the Dutch girls instructed, though always speaking their own language when together. The interest in, and affection displayed by Jessie Grainger for Mina, had been freely bestowed since their childhood, and her gentle persuasion had been sufficient to convince her papa that dear Mina should be taught to play and sing. A very attractive girl was Mina Beyers—she was a brunette, and had abundance of black hair, and large intelligent black eyes;—her cheeks were always rosy and healthy in appearance; she was of ordinary height, and not too stout. A pleasant contrast to

sweet Jessie, who was slighter and taller, as well as more refined; and, having had greater advantages, was more clever at everything connected with head knowledge. But Mina far outshone her friend in the culinary art, was quicker with her needle, at plain as well as fancy work, and had never been spoiled through over-indulgence or admiration. Her parents found a difficulty in keeping free from debt; therefore she knew what hardships were. Jessie Grainger had no occasion to work unless she liked; there were servants to do all that was required in her home, and she candidly confessed that she was glad of it; greatly preferring to attend quietly to her studies, with Mrs. Lawson at hand to consult when at a loss. With so many privileges, Jessie would necessarily become more clever than Mina, who, after school hours was obliged to go to the kitchen, turn up her sleeves, and commence work; helping her mother diligently, attending to her brothers and sisters with their lessons, setting copies, correcting errors in sums, devoted to needle-work; and thus the evenings would pass, and active, industrious little Mina well deserved her rest after seeing that her sisters were asleep, and her mother attending to the boys.

Rarely was Mina spared from her home; but Jessie's entreaties at times prevailed, and a whole

day spent at Jessie's home became a regular weekly event, looked forward to with real enjoyment. There, the music in which Mina's heart so delighted could be welcomed without fear or censure. The agreeable variety and superior society always to be met with at Mr. Grainger's often gave a tone of melancholy to Mina's words and actions, when she compared the two homes. Her mother, always anxious and worried with household cares, kept her from engaging in any more agreeable occupation. The children often required all poor Mina's command of temper to keep their high spirits under proper control, and preserve harmony among them; and she sighed as she asked herself, if things would ever change or look brighter.

## CHAPTER VI.

## YOUNG FRIENDS.

“**G**OOD morning, Jessie; how very seldom we have the pleasure of seeing you at our house.”

“Good morning, Carrie; how are you, Bella?”

“Oh, suffering from *ennui*, my dear, as usual. There is nothing in this dull hole to enliven or cheer a creature. Even the few young gentlemen there are, seem out of their element, and appear to be freezing for want of something to brace their nervous system. I marvel how any one can long exist here! I shall positively die or subside into a nonentity or mere automaton.”

“Don’t be ridiculous, Bella,” said Jessie laughing.

“I daresay you fancy I am; while you are the star—the magnet round which hover genius, beauty, and talent. While admiration and love are lavishly bestowed upon *you*, *we* have to subsist upon the—what we can pick up, like so many beggars—thankfully!”

"Why, Bella, how absurd! you know very well it is not so. You merely tease."

"No, lady modesty, (mock or real), such is our unhappy fate, to which Carrie, I have no doubt, also submissively bows."

Carrie laughed, and answered,

"Not very submissively, but hoping for better days, Jessie. Bella often preaches, and it falls harmless, I venture to affirm."

"Well," said Jessie, "I quite expected to hear you were full of excitement about the races and the ball."

"Yes, and we want to know, Jessie, how you are to be attired for this first occasion of your public appearance among your poor imitators?"

"You know very well, Bella, I cannot go, for I am to be confirmed."

"What, Jessie, you surely mean to attend?"

"I think not, Bella."

"But why, Jessie," asked Carrie Freer, "your parents do not object?"

"No, Carrie, I should like to go to the ball; but Mrs. Lawson considers it to be decidedly improper just now."

"Why, Jessie, don't let that sanctimonious—I beg your pardon; but what a nuisance that she has prevailed, and you are really determined not

to be one of us : you would shine of course as *the belle* : fancy what a pleasure that would be ! ”

“ I assure you, papa and mamma have not alluded to my going ; I confess I am terribly disappointed.”

“ I actually betted with Mr. Parley that you would be the gayest of the gay at the coming ball.”

“ Miss Rollach, I don’t like to be talked about in that way.”

Jessie’s eyes flashed, and her pretty head was thrown back haughtily, as she spoke.

“ Now, don’t be vexed with me ; you know well, that celebrated beauties are always talked of, looked at and criticised ; besides, you provoke our dormant bad tempers by so rarely honouring us with your presence. You forget that the ball will take place this day week, and if you wish to please yourself, you can easily manage to evade all remarks. What about Mr. Mortimer, does he agree to your remaining in the shade ? ”

“ I have not asked him, neither would I think of so doing.”

As Jessie uttered this hasty reply, she grew pale, recollecting, when too late, how her words might be misinterpreted by her hearers. If told to Herbert, what a queer construction he might

place upon them! How tiresome! Jessie was annoyed that she had divulged so much to these young ladies. Although so young, she was usually reserved with some persons, whom her good sense told her were not genuine and trustworthy, and the feelings which she entertained for Miss Rollach and Carrie Freer were of this description. She regarded them merely as merry, pleasure-loving girls.

Mrs. Lawson had early endeavoured to convince her pupil, as well as to instil into her pliable mind, certain high standards of friendship—good, noble, and beautiful ideas to be cultivated—superior and intellectual subjects for conversation. Jessie had learnt to be fastidious and particular, which caused irritation and vexation to the bulk of her young and giddy companions, who very seldom found her inclined for the silly chit-chat and detraction so prevalent among young people of both sexes. She aimed at something higher and more refined, and though averse to being considered unamiable, would at times by her countenance and manner betray an unwillingness to join with the rest whose lively and busy tongues were producing scandals, envyings, and jealousies.

Miss Rollach elevated her eyebrows at Jessie's speech, and renewed her inquisitive observations.

"Well, you are awfully independent; do you not care if Mr. Mortimer disapproves your decision?"

"Bella," exclaimed Carrie Freer, trying to divert the conversation, as she observed Jessie's displeased features, "we must be going now—come, you are too bad; you probe Jessie unmercifully: come."

"Not yet, Carrie; excuse me if I have appeared impertinent, though really, Jessie, if I were engaged, I should think it my duty to ask the opinion of my intended on such an occasion."

"Opinions differ," said Jessie laconically.

"So it appears: when I came out this morning at Carrie's solicitation, I had no idea that I could have been so energetic."

Miss Rollach subsided into an easy-chair, shewing she was non-plussed and evidently chagrined at her want of success; she soon roused herself, and again spoke energetically,

"I suppose Mr. Mortimer is going to take you to the race-course; I suppose we are all going."

Miss Rollach's scrutinizing eyes were fixed upon Jessie, and she remarked,

"You so often wear blue, I think, Jessie, that green would look quite as well on you: what do *you* think Carrie?"



"I don't know, blue suits most persons, *me* in particular."

"I should grow tired of blue and white, and white and blue, if *I* were obliged to wear only one or the other. Mamma allows me to dress as I please," said Jessie hastily, and fairly worried with questions.

"You so easily take offence, Jessie, I really know not what to talk about when with you."

"I beg your pardon, if I spoke crossly; I seldom think about or study colours."

"How absurd! Do you mean to insinuate that you are not permitted to choose your colours in dress?"

"Oh, you misunderstand: I *am* at liberty to wear what I please."

"Then how is it, Jessie, that you never wear pink or green? are you unwilling to confess that Mr. Mortimer has a voice in the matter?"

"Well, Bella, suppose he has?"

"Oh, nothing, only I felt sure there was another than mamma concerned in the selection."

Carrie Freer, who had been walking about examining the articles of *vertu* in the room, commenced fidgeting with her parasol, and in a weary voice asked her cousin to depart.

"What a hurry you are in! I have not yet

half rested myself; besides, I wish to ask Jessie to come to-morrow evening to our house—there will be a small gathering.”

“A dance party?” asked Jessie, trying to feel amiable.

“No, but we expect a few strangers; papa says they are nice persons.”

“Gentlemen and ladies?”

“No, only a few young men from the frontier, I think.”

“I will ask mamma if she has no other engagement.”

“Do, please, and let me know.”

Jessie left the room in search of her mother. Miss Rollach rose and surveyed herself in the mirror, remarking in a peevish tone, though her expression was calm,

“I don’t doubt she will come: ah! my beauty is a coquette after all.”

“Nonsense, Bella; how you tease every one.”

“I tell you, Carrie, you are just a simpleton! Can you not perceive that Jessie would not so soon have brightened up unless——”

Jessie’s footsteps put an end to the words which might have followed: her countenance was beaming as she replied,

"Mamma says we are free for to-morrow evening."

"Then come early."

"What time do *you* term early?"

"Oh, come to tea if you like."

"No, I can't do that, I expect Mina Beyers to tea; you may perhaps see us at eight."

"Very well, I hope Mrs. Grainger will accompany you; she would be pleasant company for Aunt Jane."

"Good-bye, Jessie. Your garden appears flourishing; please let me have a few of those sweet roses—thanks, you are not angry now, eh?"

"No, good-bye, Carrie, good-bye."

When Jessie turned to remount the step, she looked impatient, her cheeks were crimson, and she walked rapidly towards the dining-room, there to greet afresh Herbert Mortimer, who had been waiting for her nearly ten minutes.

## CHAPTER VII.

## REFLECTING.

“WHY, Jessie, you are blooming,”  
 always thought that your  
 have been Rose.”

“Ah! Herbert, I felt so much relieved  
 saw you with mamma.”

“Did you?” said Herbert, smiling  
 the reason to-day? bored again?”

“Yes, indeed; insufferably so!”

“Why, you little picture of indignation!”

“Oh dear! I wish somebody had  
 with Miss Rollach before she, rather  
 had ever heard of a place called ‘Geography.’”

“Come, come, you are vexed now  
 about her, and let us have some more  
 talk.”

“Yes, by all means, Bertie; have  
 spare time this morning?”

“I can spare half an hour; but, Jessie,  
 you mean to have lunch?”

“Mina Beyers  
 at eight.”  
 “Herbert will accom-  
 pany company for

“She appears flourish-  
 ing of those sweet  
 gery now, eh?”  
 “A-bye.”

“To mount the step, she  
 as were crimson, and  
 ds the dining-room,  
 rt Mortimer, who had  
 ten minutes.

"I forgot that altogether ; come, Bertie, mamma is beckoning us."

"I was just in for a chat with you, when I recollected your mamma begged me to bring you in to lunch, directly your friends had left you."

"Oh ! mamma, I was quite sorry when you told me just now that I was not engaged for to-morrow evening."

"I beg to observe, Mrs. Grainger, that Jessie is engaged."

"So she is," observed Mrs. Grainger, laughing pleasantly.

"Not only to-morrow evening, nor only to you. Not for one evening only, dear Jessie : that is why we are so gay."

"I read lately, Bertie, that true happiness does not consist in mere gaiety."

"Which kind of happiness do you consider the most likely to endure, Jessie ? "

"A calm truthful peace, rather than buoyancy and merriment alone, dear Mrs. Lawson."

"Yes ; but however calm our happiness, you are aware it is at times ruffled. You understand, darling," continued the gentle lady, appealing to her pupil, "that *true* peace is what God alone can bestow upon those who feel they need it, and ask for it."

"Yes, Mrs. Lawson."

"Not one on earth can obtain such without earnestly requesting and desiring it by fervent prayer. I have felt true peace, Jessie, and I have it now."

"You always look calm, dear Mrs. Lawson."

"I once lived, Jessie, as I thought securely in a kind of wild happiness; but I found it to be a mistake: and though I was the daughter of a clergyman, and was privileged to be the wife of another, I did not know real abiding peace until I was sorely tried—afflicted—troubled!"

"Oh, Mrs. Lawson, do not distress yourself."

"My dear Jessie, I feel great anxiety for young persons who profess to have happiness, and risk their all upon a baseless foundation. My astonishment and disappointment were great when I discovered how frail was my basis—how tottering!"

During this conversation between Mrs. Lawson and Jessie, Mr. Mortimer remained silent; that he was reflecting upon what Mrs. Lawson had said, was evident by his extremely grave face. Mrs. Grainger left her daughter to digest and answer, concluding that at mature womanhood *she* needed not instruction. After a short silence, Herbert requested Jessie to take a saunter with him in the garden; she rose instantly, and placed

her hand on his arm, looking pale : up and down walked the pair, not gazing at anything with seeming interest.

"Well, am I to go?" Herbert said, for he was trying to shake off a sense of soberness and gravity.

Jessie looked at him a minute, then shyly, though seriously, asked, "Bertie, do you think *our* peace is unstable?"

"Look here, my little trembler: I won't have you think such a thing, nor put such a thought into my head."

"Nor do I like to think of it—but do you?"

"I sincerely hope not, Jessie; for instance, I should be sorry ever to know my faith in you need again be shaken, or yours in me: until so unwelcome an event looms in the distant horizon of our present peaceful state, I cannot see why there need be useless fears on our part."

Jessie looked unconvinced and uncomfortable. Herbert was trying to be merry, so that her face might not be clouded, "I shall be very glad to see you smile before I go, Jessie."

"O Herbert," she said, smiling faintly, "don't go just yet, let us sit down awhile. Mrs. Lawson speaks so kindly and yet truthfully; do you not think so?"

"Certainly I do ; she has passed through much mental trouble, I suspect, dear Jessie."

"Yes, and has, as it were, awakened from a state of unreality to a certain reliable calm and joy."

"I suppose so, her expression at times is beautiful !"

"It is indeed, Bertie ; do you think if I were ever in trouble," (Jessie here spake low and dreamily) "I should come out victorious ? should I bear affliction well ? You know as yet, Bertie, I have had such an outwardly joyous life, I can't fancy being long miserable."

"Dear Jessie, what could cause you to be otherwise than happy through life ?"

"If I were to lose you by death, or you were to lose me, how should we bear our sorrow and loss—O Bertie !"

"Jessie, you are trying to make yourself miserable."

"No, no, but we ought to think of such things as certain to happen, and we know not how soon."

"Well, of course, it is natural ; but why you are taking so gloomy a view of things I cannot imagine. Probably, like your parents, we shall grow old together ; why not rather dwell on so far more agreeable a supposition : indeed,



darling, your hands are quite feverish, and your face alarms me—are you going to be ill ? ”

“No, Herbert, I think not, though my head feels queer just now.”

“The sun is too powerful for you, let us go indoors.”

Herbert and Jessie walked into the drawing-room, where he gently placed Jessie on a sofa, saying, “I will be back in a moment. Here is your vinaigrette, Jessie. Your mother is in the back garden, so I persuaded your dark girl Kitty to get it. Now, do you feel better, my white rose ? I must march off again ; lie still a little longer, at least until you feel better ; what a melancholy smile—ah ! that’s the one I like. Good-bye, Jessie ! ”

After Mr. Mortimer left, Jessie began talking to herself thus : Then, perhaps Herbert is not in possession of a reliable peace, and he may not wish to help me in obtaining it. I should not like to be weak and worthless, when I ought in reality to be firm and patient—every one has moments of sadness as well as joy. Mamma never talks upon religious subjects ; papa declares they are too difficult, and therefore leaves them willingly to the parsons ; but Mrs. Lawson, she is never more animated than when religion is her theme—

well and admirably she illustrates in her life, what she quotes for the example and benefit of others. I have put off that long talk which I intended to have with her upon the subject. I seem to shun sacred topics, so does Herbert, and yet Mrs. Lawson says our happiness is incomplete without religion. I *must* talk to her, she is so true and gentle. Herbert is altered lately. Since our last picnic he seems to look upon me as a child to be treated tenderly and lovingly. I felt quite rebellious several times this morning. I hope he won't make me quarrel with him again. He is very provoking. I am always delighted when he comes, yet he talks as if I were a mere child. I am *seventeen*—he is only four or five years older! I don't like it at all. I am getting to exact too much, perhaps, and that won't do. O dear, who is there?

Mina Beyers entered the room, saying, "Are you ill, Jessie—why, why did you not send for me?"

"I felt ill a short time ago, Mina, but I am better now; how are you? you look well."

"O yes, thank you, Jessie. Mr. Garton and I walked together part of the way: he makes me laugh so much! Is Mrs. Lawson waiting for me?"

"I don't know. It is your hour for practising, Mina, so you would do well to go and see."

Mina went, after kissing her friend. Jessie continued in a musing state:—

I like to see Mina's bright eyes and cheery bustling manner, she is very truthful, but we never talk long on any sacred subject, she does not appear to possess true vital religion. I shall be confirmed in about a fortnight, and I must then solemnly promise to renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world—how can I do it conscientiously? I love this beautiful world, and the things that are in it as well as most persons do. I like to dance, and thoroughly enjoy myself in every way. I don't understand how they can be wicked who are fond of amusements and pleasures. Surely God did not intend everyone to abstain from them and carry about a solemn visage! Mrs. Lawson would answer me properly, if only I could school myself for the interview. One thing is certain, that I am going to make a promise to God, and I may not trifle with Him. Mamma says she has never met with troubles of any consequence during her whole life: she is a very singular person in that respect; she ought to be, and probably is, extremely grateful.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE OPINION OF PAPA AND MAMMA AS TO THE BALL.

“**W**HAT is the matter, my dear,” inquired Mr. Grainger anxiously of his daughter, who was lying on the sofa with a very pale face, “what is the matter with my darling Jessie?”

“I have a headache, papa.”

“Indeed; but you look so agitated and pale, and as I opened the door you started. I will ask Dr. Curwin to call, if you should not be better in the morning.”

After chatting upon other subjects for a few minutes, Mr. Grainger suddenly remarked,—

“I suppose you have been making yourself ill about this Confirmation. You see, darling, if you wish to postpone it until the next time the Bishop comes round, it will be two or three years hence; still I think, dear, that you ought to be confirmed before you are married, so you will do well to make up your mind at once.”

A short silence ensued, when Mr. Grainger again spoke in a livelier strain :

"Ah! my darling, I have just paid my subscription to the coming race ball: only fancy persuading a man at my time of life to attend a ball, for the sake of witnessing his daughters *débüt*?"

"Who did, papa?" asked Jessie faintly.

"Who did? do you think I could easily get out of it? everyone is expecting your appearance at last; so, my darling, do not get ill and disappoint our friends."

"Mamma thinks I ought not to go."

"Mamma does! why, what is the objection?"

"You know, dear papa, I shall have to be confirmed so soon after; and Mrs. Lawson also said that it would be better for me not to go."

"But I tell you, Jessie, this is all nonsense—what conceivable difference can Confirmation make in your going to a dance before or after that ceremony—where is your mamma."

Mr. Grainger rang the bell, desiring that his wife would attend; then turning to Jessie, he said, "You see, my child, you have been ruminating too much, and doubtless feel unnerved. Ah! my dear Eliza, I am glad you were able to come, for I have a refractory daughter. I have arranged that Jessie shall accompany us to the race ball next week."

Mrs. Grainger rather surprised, replied, "Indeed,

Louis,—but of course as you see no objection, *I* will not raise any; only I fancied rather, Mrs. Lawson suggested that it was scarcely the correct thing to take up time in frivolities with so serious a business on hand.”

“Really, Mrs. Lawson cannot consider a dance so very frivolous a thing; besides, I particularly wish Jessie to go with us.”

Mr. Grainger then rose and looked out of the window with a look on his handsome face which denoted internal vexation. He rarely addressed an angry word to either his wife or daughter, and they were well aware that when he did so, it was for what he considered no trifle. Jessie rose, and placing her arms round her father’s neck, gently said,—

“Do not be angry, dear papa, if you so very much wish me to go, and mamma also; I will not offer any fresh objection.”

“That is what I consider a sensible speech, little pet. We know that Mrs. Lawson is an excellent person, no one can gainsay that; at the same time, darling, remember, she is not your parent. By-the-bye, Eliza, I wish you could spare Mrs. Lawson to visit her Blanco friends. I met Mrs. Talby this morning, who inquired particularly after her welfare; and as Mrs. Lawson has been suffering lately

from *tic-doloureux*, she might like a little change, eh! my dear."

"Yes, but how will Jessie manage without her? I do not know how to spare her yet."

"O, Jessie can surely do without her for a fortnight;" then turning to his daughter, Mr. Grainger said, "Here, mouse, do not go to sleep yet—what can be the matter with you, have you had a little squabble with Herbert, eh?"

"O no, papa."

"Well, cheer up, dear." Then addressing his wife, said "I expect a few friends to-night, which will not inconvenience you, I hope."

"Not at all, Louis. Then you quite intend to be confirmed, Jessie dear, for you see I have ordered your dress, and if you have altered your mind, I will countermand the order, and get the ball attire ready instead."

"Certainly not," Mr. Grainger peremptorily exclaimed. "I met Archdeacon S. this morning, and he spoke confidently of Jessie being one of the candidates. It has already been once put off, therefore I feel sure it will not do on any account again to postpone it. This is too much worry for your little brain, Jessie; so you will, I hope, give papa permission to settle this for you."

"Yes, papa," replied Jessie with closed eyes.

"Very well, Louis, then it is settled, and I know what to arrange for both occasions."

"I wish you to accompany me to-morrow, Eliza; some beautiful things have reached the store, and among them two beautiful dresses which I ordered especially, one for you, the other for Jessie. I know how delighted Jessie would be to have her little friend Mina with her, so if you both come you can choose some material that you may think suitable for her also."

"Thanks, dear papa, I am so very glad."

"Well, mind you come in time, before they are packed up for the Boer ladies."

Mr. Grainger soon after left the room. Mrs. Grainger then walked up to her daughter and impatiently said, "Really, Jessie, you and your father will entirely spoil that girl, she is industrious, hard-working, and well-behaved; but I cannot help thinking, that taking so much notice of her, to the exclusion of your English friends, is a mistake."

"Dear mamma, she is quite as truthful and loving as any of the young ladies here."

"Well, Jessie, for my part, I cannot admire your choice; if she were of English parentage, I could bear it far better."



"You surely would not have me give up Mina Beyers."

"No, no darling; only I think it is not wise to encourage her in expensive amusements; she will probably marry some Dutch farmer, and then you will utterly lose her."

"No, mamma, I do not think she will do that."

"You cannot think that an English gentleman would ever marry into her family."

"Why not, dear mamma?"

"Because, Jessie, it is impossible—her father a mere trader with the Boers, a drunkard also! Her mother, a person of no particular note in anything, rather a coarse woman, and without education."

"O mamma, pray do not talk any more about Mina, she is such a kind-hearted creature, so pretty and clever; Mrs. Lawson is quite astonished at the progress Mina makes with her music."

"My dear Jessie, that is quite possible, for she has both taste and ear for harmony; still that is no reason why you and your papa should encourage her in extravagant habits. If she gets introduced into society, she will certainly entertain wrong ideas, and perhaps be a source of trouble to her family."

"O mamma, pray do not think so of Mina!"

"My child, believe me, it is a mistake of yours to fancy that all persons are sufficiently strong-minded to resist the encroachments of evil."

"Dear mamma, I early learnt to love Mina, and I cannot credit the notion of her being led astray by example, she is so sensible and right-minded."

"This is real nonsense, Jessie."

"O mamma, I hope not; I should be so bitterly disappointed if I were obliged to believe the contrary."

"Well, I shall consider it very proper conduct, should Mina refuse to go with us to the ball."

Jessie's face was shadowed with divers emotions. That her mother's surmise might be correct, greatly tended to her chagrin. Mrs. Grainger glanced at her daughter's perplexed countenance, then taking up her book, slowly left the room; deeming it useless to try argument with respect to Jessie's feelings concerning Mina. The girl's ardent affection was very plausible, and the many beautiful and amiable traits each found in the other, served the more to endear and strengthen the regard so early manifested by both. Mina's modesty and retirement had procured her many admirers, which she had persistently discountenanced; for not only did she consider herself too

young to be so noticed, but she was unwilling to receive attentions where she could not reciprocate the regard. Therefore, many called her proud, a dependant upon the Graingers' generosity and benevolence. Jessie and Mina were not aware of these rumours and false statements being afloat.

## CHAPTER IX.

## JESSIE AND MINA'S FIRST BALL.

**A**FTER much persuasion Mina Beyers consented to go with her friend to the race ball. She said quietly, though at the time she looked flushed and anxious, that it would, perhaps, be considered wrong and bold of her; but she was stopped by Jessie's urgent request, and by numerous other excuses; her bright eyes evidently glistened with joy at the prospect, and she was induced to risk the opinions and thoughts of all other persons upon the subject.

Jessie, being victorious, talked of the pleasure in store for them. Mr. and Mrs. Grainger were gratified by their daughter's cheerfulness having returned; and Herbert, who was told by Mr. Grainger of Jessie's unwillingness to be present at the ball, laughed and said she was much too particular.

The girls were being assisted in adorning themselves; Mina was to see her dress only on condition of promising to attire herself in Jessie's room.

The evening found Mina rosy but agitated—Jessie, wondering who would look the prettier—Jessie's rich white lace over a pink silk skirt, and Mina's figured tulle with blue trimmings, suited the girls admirably. Jessie's hair as usual hung in curls, a pretty wreath of small pink roses being adjusted on her head. Mina's black hair was in braids, with blue flowers fastened on one side. Trains were not then in fashion; but skirts were long and graceful.

Both mammas were admiring as the finishing strokes were put to the attire of the girls, when Jessie said to Mina, "I think you have done your best to extinguish others that we know will be there to-night."

"O Jessie, what do you mean: ought I to go in this style? Please tell me, Mrs. Grainger, am I too grand?"

"Stop, Mina," cried Jessie, hurriedly, "I don't wish you to speak about your appearance. Mamma, does not Mina do us credit?"

"Yes, child: now are you all right? are you not going too far?" said Mrs. Grainger, aside, to Jessie. "Do not flatter Mina again, she will have admiration enough to turn a wiser head than hers."

“O, Miss Jessie, you are just lovely, that’s all,” said Mina, in rapture.

Jessie’s musical laugh resounded in the room for several moments, and Mina gazed entranced at her friend, whose sylph-like form moved about so lightly.

Mina was doubtful, after all, if it were not presumptuous in her to venture among such a grand assembly.

Herbert Mortimer was impatiently waiting below, and Jessie ran down briskly for him to have a peep ere she put on her wrap. Not content with that, she insisted upon Mina also coming down. Herbert’s glance rested approvingly upon the pretty little figure, and hastily-retreating form. He exclaimed, “Dear Jessie, what a transformation in that girl! I had no idea you could have made her so thoroughly lady-like.”

“Why, Bertie, Mina never looks otherwise.”

“No; but what has she done with herself? I wonder if she——never mind, time will show, eh! my beautiful rose?”

Mina, as well as Jessie, had more partners that evening than any of the other young ladies there.

Miss Rollach looked on with a searching, and far from kind or approving, glance at the Dutch girl, who attracted so much attention; and she

remarked satirically, that Mina was a stuck-up, ignorant girl, whom the Graingers were spoiling fearfully.

Mr. Benjamin Dawson, to whom this remark was made, smiled, and showed his beautiful teeth, and replied, "For my part, Miss Rollach, who you know am but a stranger in the colony, I have not sufficiently studied the Dutch ladies, and therefore bow to your superior knowledge."

"I don't profess to know much of them," said Miss Rollach, sneering.

"Miss Beyers seems modest, and really pretty," rejoined Mr. Dawson, again glancing in the direction where Mina was.

"Do *you* think her pretty?" queried Miss Rollach, with a shrug of her shoulders, and disdainfully averting her head.

"Yes, of course; but not exactly beautiful—still, her dark eyes, glossy hair, and brilliant complexion, are to be admired—she certainly is very pretty."

"Do come away, Mr. Dawson; you are staring at the girl until she will consider herself perfection!"

Miss Rollach's sneer was observed by Mina, who blushed exceedingly.

Albert Garton immediately walked up to Mina

and secured her for a waltz; seeing which, Miss Rollach bit her lip with vexation, and thus addressed Jessie Grainger—"I cannot imagine what you have done to make yourself more radiant than you usually are—really you discourage me."

"*I do!* in what way?"

Jessie was panting and out of breath from waltzing with Herbert, and was not pleased by the questioner stopping to talk to her.

"You know, Jessie, what with your own dazzling appearance, and the radiant countenance of Miss Beyers, the gentlemen cannot look at me!"

"Indeed, I hope they have not suddenly become blind."

Miss Rollach went round to Mr. Mortimer's right side, intending, no doubt, that he should offer his arm, but he must have been pre-occupied, for she vainly hinted and gave out suggestions to that effect.

Herbert was not inclined for the honour. At last Herbert said, "Really, Miss Rollach, either you or Jessie will do well to sit down, there is not sufficient space for three."

"O yes, *I* am engaged for the next dance."

Mr. Mortimer found a vacant place for Miss



Rollach, and then turned to Jessie, saying—"Was I very rude? I could not help it."

"*I* freely forgive you, Bertie," answered Jessie, smiling.

"I wonder why persons persevere in making themselves disagreeable."

"It is hard to say, Bertie—see, she is calling Garton away from Mina."

"I wish him joy; what a pity that Garton should have been so much taken up with Miss Rollach. I think Miss Beyers would make him a much better wife."

"Yes, I am confident she would. Do you think that there is really anything serious going on between Garton and Bella?"

"Well, Jessie, if hoping is worth anything in the matter, I hope not; but I feel sure she is the one to lead Garton anywhere."

"O Herbert! do pray try to prevent it."

"Can *I* be of any assistance, Mr. Mortimer?" asked Miss Rollach.

"No, thank you," said Jessie, nervously starting. "Herbert, can we procure sitting room? Do you see how suddenly Mina has become pale; what can have occurred?"

"Shall we walk to her, and inquire?"

"Yes."

"My dear Mina, are you tired?" to which question she answered wearily and sadly,

"Yes, Jessie, I am rather tired; are you soon going home?"

"I think so; but come with me, Mina—come."

They left the dancing-room together by a door near to which they had been sitting, and entered a much smaller apartment, appropriated by the magistrate as his private office. The large apartment, in which dancing was kept up with unabated vigour, was the magistrate's court, and therein were concerts sometimes held, being the largest room in the town of that kind, closed at all other times, unless the judges were on circuit, when it was no doubt crowded for graver purposes and duties. The music was produced chiefly from violins, several men standing on a platform endeavouring to produce the best and most lively sounds.

Mr. and Mrs. Grainger found several of their friends at the ball; but the greater number of persons were Dutch—they were chiefly young married couples.

Jessie smiled when she saw coloured nurses with their mistresses' infants squatted on the floor, in the ladies' private apartment; she exclaimed, at the sight, "O mamma, these poor little things ought

to be at home, asleep in their cots ; they might take cold carried about in the night air."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Grainger, "it is very wrong to allow it. Come, Jessie ; come, Mina."

Jessie confessed that she was tired and sleepy when she reached home ; but Mina declared she was neither the one nor the other. Her eyes were very bright, and her cheeks pale—she seemed excited, and was desirous to return home instantly ; but Jessie prevailed upon her to pass the rest of the night with her. A wakeful time it proved to Mina ; for though it was three o'clock when they all retired, *she* was unable to rest in bed, and therefore rose, put a shawl around her, and sat in an easy chair near the window ; a very deep sigh now and then escaped her, disclosing to Jessie, when she awoke and lay watching her friend, that Mina was troubled about something fresh.

Jessie said, "Why do you not come and lie down, Mina ? pray do, you must be cold there."

"No, Jessie, I prefer to stay here."

"I disapprove, dear Minnie, of your dwelling on gloomy subjects ; come, talk to me."

"Oh ! Jessie, you must sleep : I shall disturb you if I talk."

"But, Mina, why are you sighing so deeply ?"

“Never mind, Miss Jessie, I feel better afterwards.”

“Don’t call me *Miss* Jessie, or I will call you *Miss* Mina.”

“Oh ! no ; please try and sleep, *I* will do so presently.”

“Well, good night, Mina, you little obstinate !”

“Good morning, dear Jessie ; the sun shines !”

## CHAPTER X.

## THE INVITATION.

THE next afternoon Miss Garton called upon the Graingers. She was a fine tall woman; there was nothing girlish or silly about her, she was a thoroughly practical person, had been early initiated into the troubles and mysteries of house-keeping; all her younger brothers and sisters depending upon and looking up to her, caused her days to be very differently spent from those of most girls. Her mother, who had always been a sickly person, usually entrusted most of the household affairs to her active and energetic daughter, and when Mrs. Garton died,—five years previously to Anna's introduction here,—she was installed mistress in her father's house. She bravely submitted—her firm will and determined manner procured respect and obedience from the servants. In fact, very few persons in the town failed to acknowledge Anna Garton to be a superior woman. She very rarely visited for the sake of mere gossip,

but generally for some particular purpose ; therefore when Jessie, who was in her own apartment reading, or trying to read, was informed that Miss Garton was waiting for her in the drawing-room, she exclaimed—

“Miss Garton ! what can be the cause of her unexpected visit ? ”

Jessie rose languidly from her couch, glanced in the mirror to see if her curls were in order, and then thoughtfully proceeded to welcome her visitor, who affectionately embraced Jessie, saying quietly,

“You very seldom see me, and consequently feel surprised at my call ; I trust you are better.”

“I have not been ill, Miss Garton,” said Jessie, pleasantly.

“I was told you were at the ball last night, Jessie.”

“Yes, I was there, and enjoyed myself very much, why did not you accompany your brother ? ”

“In the first place, I am not fond of dancing, and little Henrietta was far from well, so of course I could not leave her ; I am pleased to know that you were happy, Jessie. I came this afternoon to ask if you would like to go with us to Ballott’s Bay for a week. Dr. Conwin has recommended the sea-side for Hetty, so papa thinks it will be well for all to go, the fresh sea breeze will be

very exhilarating at this time of the year : would you like to accompany us ? ”

“ Oh ! yes, thank you, Anna, I should indeed like to be one of your party.”

“ I think we shall be very comfortable there. We have a fine large tent, and papa has hired the wooden house ; if you ask your mamma at once, I can be sure of you.”

Mrs. Grainger just then entered the room, and warmly greeted Miss Garton, for whom she felt sincere regard.

“ My dear Anna, you make yourself quite a stranger ! I am glad you have called this afternoon, I shall keep you here if possible, and Mr. Grainger will, I know, escort you home.”

“ I regret that this is not possible. Hetty is so very exacting when ill, I can scarcely leave her ; I hope you will excuse me, and grant my request that Jessie may go with us to Ballott's Bay.”

“ Are you all going ? I am sure the children will derive much benefit therefrom. So you have been asking Jessie to accompany you, Anna ? Yes ; a companion will be needful for you. I have no objection ; Mr. Grainger will be glad, for he was saying lately that he thought Jessie required a change of air and scene.”

"Then I am truly glad that I made the request."

"When are you going, Anna?"

"Next Saturday morning we shall start in the waggon."

"Albert, also?"

"No, but every evening, papa, or one of my brothers, will come over on horseback. We shall be very glad to see any friends, especially Mr. Mortimer."

"He will, no doubt, find the way, Anna." Mrs. Grainger smiled. "Do stay a short time, dear, I have so many questions to ask you. Jessie cannot remain longer than six or eight days, for you know the Bishop is expected next week."

"Yes, I know, Mrs. Grainger; Amy is one of the candidates: the poor girl is anxious to be home again in time."

"Is she only fourteen, Anna?"

"That is her age, and she appears younger;—she is wishing to be confirmed,—the Archdeacon has examined her."

"I do not approve of any one being admitted to the rite at so early an age."

"Nor do I like it, but Amy has a particular wish not to postpone the ceremony; I reasoned



with her about the probability of the novelty attracting her, but she disowns any such feeling. Amy is sedate and sensible enough for a much older girl, and I think we are doing right not to interfere more than we have done."

"I suppose, Anna, you will be very thankful when your brothers and sisters are old enough to act for themselves?"

"I shall; though I cannot say my duties are either irksome or unpleasant to me. I experience a degree of satisfaction in the performance of each and all my necessary occupations, for I gain so much additional insight into things, and the victory gained is so agreeable and encouraging."

"But, Anna, I often think if you were to be loved, and found the feeling on your part reciprocated, how would you manage about your brothers and sisters?"

"Oh! dear Mrs. Grainger, I never look at probabilities; I daresay the gentlemen consider *me* a strong-minded woman, without time to cultivate the tender passion, if even I am allowed to possess a heart."

"Oh! Anna, if a gentleman required a wife with good common sense, energetic habits, amiable and lady-like manners—surely if he sought a wife in you, he would not be disappointed!"

"Thank you very much for your kind opinion."

Anna's voice, as she spoke, was husky, and tears filled her eyes.

"Why, dear, since when have you been entertaining so humble a view of your virtues and good qualities? It does not conduce to self-respect to dwell too long upon imaginary virtues."

Anna Garton then rose to leave.

"Really, mamma," said Jessie as she watched from the open door Anna Garton's retreating form down the path to the gate, "really I ought to be quite proud of being chosen by Anna as a companion!"

"Why, Jessie?" asked her mother in surprise.

"Because she is so much older and graver than I am. I can scarcely understand why she has taken a fancy to me in preference to others, and this is not the first time that she has thus favoured me."

"Anna is very sensible and clever, and I am glad that she seeks your society, my dear."

"Mamma, what beautiful teeth she has, yet she very rarely smiles."

"Yes, her smile is pleasant to witness. Anna is a fine character, and the more you know of her the more you will like her. I would there were more young ladies resembling Anna Garton in

genuine uprightness and strength of mind. I have watched her conduct since she was left without a mother, and I have been often astonished at the calm self-possession and deep penetration she has always displayed."

"How pleasant to be thus spoken of. Dear mamma, I have heard Mrs. Lawson call Anna, a noble woman."

"Yes, she is really entitled to that term *noble*, her brothers and sisters look up to her with the greatest respect."

"I wonder if *I* shall be only a beautiful woman; I desire to be more, mamma, indeed I do. What sort of trial or suffering do I require to make me know that my character is becoming noble and useful?"

"Trial and suffering, Jessie! what do you mean?"

"I cannot discern my failings, mamma; and therefore I sometimes grow troubled: is it because I am loved and cherished *too* tenderly?"

"How can you talk in this way? how can any young person desire trial or suffering? Jessie, your words astound me! Can you be weary of the tenderness evinced by those who love you?"

"No, oh! no, mamma; but I am afraid of becoming selfish, and far from approaching Anna

Garton in nobleness of thought and action. Pray mamma, do not look vexed with me for what I have said."

"Well, Jessie, I do not know where you pick up such gloomy notions, and I very much dislike to hear you give utterance to them. There is no reason that I am aware of for your speaking in so melancholy a strain!"

"Do not look displeased, mamma, nor think me foolish, but I have lately been troubled with such thoughts."

"Here is papa!"

"Ah!" said Mr. Grainger, glancing from his wife to his daughter, "I think I can guess of what you ladies have been conversing—Miss Garton's visit."

"You are right, Louis; did you meet her?"

"I did; and I see that her request has been canvassed. Well, I must submit, mamma, eh?"

"Yes, Louis, I think the change will be very good for Jessie."

"Only six days, papa," cried Jessie eagerly."

"Indeed, *only* six days," repeated her father emphatically.

"That is not a very long time, you teasing papa!"

"No? Well, I promise to be submissive,

though it strikes me I shall require a substitute. Who during your absence is to bring my cigar-case and slippers when I return home exhausted? Where shall I find another musician and songstress? But, Jessie," continued her father, smiling, "these are minor evils: what will Herbert do with his leisure hours, of which he has so large a stock?"

Jessie sat smiling and glancing at her papa's face, but at the last part of his speech she sprang forward and stopped more words, with many kisses.

## CHAPTER XI.

## BALLOTT'S BAY.

IN Ballott's Bay there was only one vessel lying at anchor, the first that had ever entered the creek. The road from town was in some parts good; on nearing the Bay it was very steep and circuitous, down a hill overlooking a hollow, in which stood the wooden house, which, as well as the ocean, was visible to the comers for a few minutes ere they turned the road to the left. The small dwelling was on one side of a shallow river which ran down to the sea; on the opposite side grew trees and bushes in wild disorder and profusion. Two grand hills, one on each side of the river far above, the tops projecting towards each other, leaving but a narrow opening for a view of the ocean. Ballott's Bay had the appearance of a secret *rendezvous* for bold pirates to smuggle in their merchandize, so secluded and sombre, though grand and picturesque, was the scene. The Gartons' waggon reached the Bay in safety. The morning had been remarkably

warm, and the young ladies were truly glad to descend from the rather uncomfortable position in which they had been, on account of both Amy and Hetty (who had been obliged to lie down the greater part of the time). The large waggon with sixteen oxen going at a very leisurely pace, had induced the two invalids to sleep; and at the sudden cessation of motion when the waggon stopped, Amy opened her eyes, and being next to Jessie, exclaimed,

“How happy I am! I do wish I could always live near to the sea. Can you smell it?”

“You feel better from the mere knowledge of being near the restless blue ocean?” asked Jessie, smilingly.

“I do, indeed; where has Anna gone?”

“She is at her post as mistress: I expect, we must wait in here, for the driver is out, spanning his oxen. How startled little Hetty is! don’t be afraid, dear——.”

“Anna,” cried the child, piteously, “Anna, Anna!” Loudly screaming with a look of fear, which Jessie and Amy strove in vain to quell, Jessie sprang to the ground in search of her friend. In the wooden house she saw Anna ordering and arranging things with the help of two maid-servants. Jessie ran in saying,

"Do go quickly, Anna! Hetty awoke in such a fright, we cannot quiet her, so pray hasten to her."

Before Jessie had completed her tale, Anna hastily said a few words to Kaatje and hurried away, leaving Jessie to follow. When she took her former seat, she gazed wonderfully at the change: there sat Anna with the child in her lap, no trace of sorrow or fear to be seen on her face; she was calmly surveying her sister Anna, who was distributing some tempting biscuits, smiling and chatting in serene enjoyment, while her countenance looked radiant.

"Oh, Anna, how she loves you!" cried Jessie.

Miss Garton replied,

"Dear Jessie, my thoughts, my whole life, are given to these precious sisters: I should not know what to do if they did not love me!"

"*I* love you; I love Anna so much," said little Hetty, clasping her arms tightly round her sister's neck.

"So do *I*; I love Anna—next to papa—more than any one in the whole world," exclaimed Amy, whose face was bright with the energy of her words: and Jessie gazed from one to the other in silence, as she thought how truly the eldest sister merited such love.



"Now, my dears, Jacob is driving away the oxen, so we can all escape from our prison. Kaatje will also be at a loss for further orders. Come, Amy, darling—please assist her, Jessie, with the aid of your arm. Come pet, here we are, at home for a week—how free and unrestrained one feels here!"

"Yes, Anna, and I wish we lived here altogether; do you?"

"No, dear Amy, I like the change, but it would be a dreary life, always to live here."

There was much to occupy them after the contents of the waggon had been removed; all were in excellent spirits, and the day drew to a close. The evening mist compelled them to withdraw into the cosy little house. Near the window they all clustered. Hetty fell asleep on Anna's lap; Amy sat on a stool with her head resting against her sister's knees. Jessie stood, her eyes and ears strained in expectation of approaching footsteps or voices. Darkness grew more apparent, and the silence long unbroken, when Amy rather peevishly remarked,

"Miss Grainger, I wish those monkeys would cease their noise: do you hear them?"

"No, I do not hear them now."

"What makes you so quiet, Anna?" was the

next question from the delicate and sensitive Amy.

"Do you wish to talk to me, Amy?"

"Yes, Anna, the silence is so queer and gloomy. Where can Johanna and Kaatje be?"

"Not far off, Amy. I told them to be on the look-out for papa."

"I hope Albert will come this evening, Amy."

"Miss Grainger, you look sad!"

"I am not often sad. I was thinking about our Confirmation, Amy, and wondering if we shall dwell upon it afterwards as we are now doing. Mrs. Lawson tells me, that our future holiness of life depends very much upon the earnestness and sincerity of our fulfilling what we profess and undertake to do."

"When did Mrs. Lawson say this to you, Amy?"

"She has lately often talked to me respecting my duties, and the necessity of being careful to adhere to any vows which I make. I hope I may live to be obedient. I often forget what I most desire to remember."

"Not often, Amy," said her sister. "Persevere, and you know success will be the result."

"I like to be certain of that, Miss Grainger, and wish being good were easier, or that it

were pleasant to practise self-denial without so much trouble."

"Oh, Amy, I am confident you are not in earnest."

"I am: Mrs. Lawson told me that I have a peevish temper; which I know to be true. She says little things must not be dwelt upon and swollen into grievances."

"You are weak and agitated, Amy, dear: that is the reason probably; you do not mean to be peevish."

"No, Anna, but still I feel that I do not like trying to conquer; and Mrs. Lawson tells me that is simply because evil is *natural*, and striving to overcome evil against our natural inclination is hard. She is extremely kind and patient with me, and I am very fond of her. I think *you* also, Miss Grainger, must be very much attached to Mrs. Lawson. Hark! I think I hear voices."

"So you do. Good evening, all. Ah, my youngest asleep! Well, Anna, got on nice—feel tolerably settled?"

"All well, papa, so far: how did you leave my brothers?"

"Both lively, and yet dull without you, my child. I have a note for you somewhere, Miss Jessie, I think."

"Thank you, Mr. Garton. Have you seen papa?"

"No, but Mr. Mortimer gave this to me for you."

"Anna, Albert spent this afternoon at the Rollachs',—some gay doings there."

"Indeed, papa?"

"Yes; now, Miss Jessie, what were you saying?"

Jessie had retreated to a window hoping to read her billet; but Anna placed a candle on the table, and motioned to her to draw near, saying softly,

"You cannot read in the dark, Jessie."

A smile and nod came from Jessie, who was soon deep in her note from Herbert. In a few minutes she joined the others at the supper-table.

"Mr. Herbert has told you of his extra work?"

"Yes, Mr. Garton; I think he always has something extra to do when we both wish it otherwise."

"He is a fine active fellow—never budes, never shirks business; he is constantly employed. You will not see much of him down here, Miss Jessie."

"Oh, yes, I shall," replied Jessie confidently, and smiling.

"Very nice supper, Anna. How did you manage with the unpacking—easily—eh?"

"Oh, yes, papa, considering that we have a little more of that sort of work to do to-morrow. We intend to be quite rural, and enjoy ourselves perfectly while we can, do we not, Amy?"

"Yes, indeed; but I wish Albert and Sydney were here. Will you let them come to-morrow, papa?"

"Very good. Are you not ready for bed, my little daughter? you look worn out."

"I am tired, papa; the sea breeze is so fresh and delightful, yet so lulling. Did not you feel it, papa?"

"I did, Amy; but remember I am not such a mermaid as you."

All laughed at this idea, and presently Amy retired.

"Anna, is your voice in tune, my child?"

"I'll try, papa, if you wish me to sing," said Anna, with a bright look.

Anna's voice was a full rich contralto, and her father greatly enjoyed listening to her sweet song, while he smoked a cheroot, reclining in an easy-chair.

"That's a good beginning, Anna," said her

father, after the first song. "We must have a duet, young ladies, for I like to be humoured."

"Very well, papa. Jessie, I think we can manage, 'Lightly, lightly, swiftly follow.'"

"That's very pretty : thank you, dears. Now, Anna, my favourite, Moore's beautiful 'Farewell, but whenever.'"

Anna did justice to it, and then Jessie sang "The Last Rose of Summer." A few precious books, brought for amusement and instruction, were then produced by Miss Garton, who was requested by her father to read aloud. She instantly complied : Jessie leaning over her shoulder. Anna never read novels—at least not any of the lighter description. Mr. Garton revelled in magazines, pamphlets, and newspapers of all kind. Jessie liked a novel for what are termed idle moments, that is to say, when time was not required for purposes of a higher nature : she had read many of the superior kind, and confessed a liking for the patient tracing of characters, and a desire to know the issue of the novelist's plans and ideas.

## CHAPTER XII.

## BALLOTT'S BAY CONTINUED.

IN the evening of the fourth day, twilight is succeeding to the intense heat of the sun's declension. Miss Garton, her sisters, and Jessie Grainger are sitting on some stones near the rocky beach, while the waves dash with a pleasant sound on the pebbles, and receding, leave white bubbling froth as it were to follow. Jessie's face is again expectant, for Mr. Mortimer promised to leave cares and business, and come, risking all consequences. She starts and turns her head; there is a sound of horses nearing—a cantering and noisy voices. Jessie rising, beholds Mr. Garton, Albert Sydney, Mr. Dousin, and a stranger. She strains her eyes and looks in vain for a form she felt confident was of the party.

Albert gaily advanced, extended his hand, and said, "Good evening to you all, ladies bright." The other gentlemen did the same.

Anna gazes wonderingly at her father: how and

in what way were comforts to be provided for so many, spake her gentle eyes.

"We'll manage, Anna, very roughly for once, perhaps—they would come, dear, wild young fellows."

"Jolly snug place this, Garton!"

"So *I* think," laughingly answered Albert. "Pleasant work to stay awhile and chase away the worries and cares of life."

"You take them very easily, I think, Mr. Albert."

"Now, Miss Grainger, this is just like ladies, who consider grey hairs alone a sign of trouble."

"No, no; but you never look careworn."

"That is because I bear the ills of life so well and bravely. You see, Miss Jessie, I laugh, so I am thought to be free from all annoyance and vexation."

"I hope you are, Albert; I should not like to see you look a melancholy and unhappy man."

"Ah! Amy, little woman, we all have our share."

"I say, Garton, you must not get prosy; perhaps the sea air makes you sentimental?"

With a peculiar look Albert turned to his friend, but made no reply.

"What was going on at the Rollachs', Albert?"



"Going on there? when, Amy?"

"Papa said there were gaieties which hindered you from coming last Tuesday."

"Yes, Amy, there were. I say, young ladies, we shall have a storm, ere long; this is a singular evening, a precursor of elemental strife. Hark! do you hear?"

"Thunder, Albert; let us go indoors."

"Yes, come, Miss Jessie. By-the-bye, Mortimer will be here directly."

"Did you see him?"

"Yes, and asked him if I should wait for him, as I saw he was engaged. He declined my offer, saying he should probably overtake us."

Jessie turned in the direction of the road far above their heads, but nothing was yet visible; so she walked soberly into the house, with a curiously-mingled feeling of hope and fear. Miss Garton had seen her youngest sister in bed, and was now preparing the table for supper, as so many more than she expected would share that meal. Mr. Garton, senior, had ensconced himself in the easy chair, and was puffing away at his cheroot, in a state of mental relaxation and comfort.

"You have done well to seek shelter," he remarked, as the group entered. "Look at that cloud."

"Yes; and listen, papa! I hear great drops of rain falling," Amy remarked.

"I do hope Mortimer will reach us before the storm is at its height."

Albert peered out as he spoke.

Jessie presently went to the window, and thoughtfully gazed at the lowering, dark, threatening sky. The atmosphere was very oppressive and remarkably still; the effect upon all, especially on Jessie, was relaxing and overpoweringly gloomy.

Miss Garton's eyes wandered again and again to her silent friend; but being engaged with Kaatje, she left Jessie to meditate undisturbed.

The young gentlemen were sadly disappointed by not receiving the usual bright response from the admired beauty, and by degrees relapsed into silence, as they found most of their remarks wholly unnoticed by her.

Albert and Amy were conversing in whispers, occasionally expressing a wish that Mr. Mortimer would appear.

"Now, papa, all is ready: come Albert, come Amy."

As Miss Garton finished speaking, the thunder suddenly burst over their heads, the lightning flashed in fearful brightness, while torrents of

rain poured down in deafening noise on the little low house.

"These are truly grand and awful sounds combined, Mr. Garton: I admire this wild effect."

"You do, Dousin? I cannot say that I do."

"O! the scene is superb; the whole face of nature wears so sublime and glorious an aspect—to me it is neither repulsive nor fearful. After a storm, too, how delightfully pure and fresh, as well as reviving, everything in nature appears. Have you not also experienced a degree of animation and vigour in your system after a severe tempest? I own to a certain pleasure in admiring the freaks and changes of the elements."

"Decidedly; but I feel so small in a storm like this, and you are aware *that* in reality is not the case."

Albert answered with a smile.

The war with the elements continued for some time. Not one looked so pale and anxious as Jessie Grainger. Had Herbert left home or had he not? she continually asked herself. She finally walked into the sleeping apartment, and sat pondering in the darkness.

Presently Anna Garton entered; a flash of lightning revealed her friend, with hands clasped and eyes shut. "Jessie, dear, I am quite sure you are

making yourself ill by conjuring up needless fears. Do come out ! ”

“No, Anna, I feel as if something dreadful will happen in this awful weather.”

“Jessie, you must remember we are to trust God always, especially in times of danger.”

“I know ; but the darkness is intense. Herbert could not possibly see his way. Oh ! Anna, what ought to be done ? ”

“My dear friend, the darkness is no darkness with God. Have you asked Him to preserve Mr. Mortimer ? ”

“Yes, Anna, I have ; but I feel absolutely wretched.”

“You ought not ; how can you trust and still feel afraid ? ”

“Oh ! Anna, do not even try to comfort me.”

“What avails your excitement ? pray keep quiet, Jessie.”

The peals of thunder were again deafening. Hetty awoke crying. Amy sat up in bed listening. Jessie’s face grew intensely pale. Anna calmly soothed her timid sister, who crept in alarm to her side.

“I am so frightened, Anna ! ” sobbed the child.

Her sister’s loving words soon calmed the

trembler, and she lay quietly down while Anna went to Jessie, who was weeping bitterly.

"Jessie, dear, strive for calmness ——"

"Anna, have you no pity! I cannot bear this delay."

Anna placed an arm around the sobbing girl, and entreated her to think and hope that all would be well.

"Anna, I would not write yesterday, and this morning I had another opportunity."

"Which you did not use, dear Jessie, hoping to see Mr. Mortimer this evening,—quite natural."

"I was vexed that he did not come. I wanted to make him long to see me."

"Why do you distrust Mr. Mortimer? Men are so differently constituted from what we are."

"Ought he to care more about business than me?"

"Doubtless Mr. Mortimer considers that you know him sufficiently well to understand his actions and motives."

"Oh! Anna, will the storm never abate?"

"I am sure Mr. Mortimer has judgment enough to act wisely and well—he has sent a note every day."

"Anna, you never loved, or you could not talk so indifferently."

Miss Garton rose, and gently left the room.

"O Bertie, if I could only know that you were safe," cried Jessie, while tears of despondency poured down her cheeks. "How sorry Mrs. Lawson would be if she knew all my thoughts. I feel so rebellious, and refuse to submit myself to God. I think only of Bertie; if the storm would abate we could send after him."

Anna again entered, and kneeling down, prayed earnestly and lovingly that comfort might be imparted to the one and safety to the other.

"Why does he not come, Anna?"

"Oh Jessie, do be more patient: God is not far off, and does all things well."

A quarter of an hour passed. Miss Garton listened to the wild waves madly dashing on the beach and rocks, and the moaning wind as it swept round their frail habitation. She sorrowfully thought of the young man alone, fighting against the darkness, rain, and wind. She pondered with horror upon his wandering out of the way, not able to distinguish where his horse might lead him, commending him again to One mighty to save!

"Anna, I hear sounds: it must be he!"

They sprang up and hastened to the next room, when standing in the doorway was a figure, which to Jessie's joy proved to be really Herbert.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## HERBERT MORTIMER'S SAFETY.

THE gentlemen instantly rose and surrounded Mr. Mortimer, with eager questions, and grave surprise depicted on their countenances, not expecting he would make his appearance; but trusting that the uncertain weather had prevented his intended departure from town; that he had left George, and was perfectly safe, after travelling in such a night, was considered miraculous.

"Why, my dear Mortimer!" exclaimed Albert Garton, "you are surely more dead than alive."

"Come near the fire and get your apparel dried," cried Dousin; but Garton called out, "No, no, you will first take off your garments, for you must be soaked; come, man, and do that first—we'll manage to procure some dry articles of apparel to make you presentable to the ladies."

With a look at the pale Jessie, and a whispered "I won't be long," he released her hands, and she found they were wet.

"Now, Jessie, dear, pray sit down: you are shivering."

Anna remarked kindly, as she drew her friend to a chair, "True, dear, God's ways are wonderful! We ought to be so thankful, at least Herbert and I ought; I was so miserable!"

"In this world we cannot have sunshine always, dear."

"No, Anna."

"Endeavour, Jessie, for the future to be more resigned; there must be a parting some day, and then you will be compelled to submit."

"Anna, how can you talk calmly about such things?"

"My dear Jessie, it is best to think and talk of events that will necessarily occur once in our lives; and separation would not be half so appalling as it appears, if we could only dwell upon the bright re-union in our Father's home above."

"Anna, you speak as a person would who was much older than you are. How came you to think so earnestly and solemnly upon such a subject?"

"I think it would be useful for all to meditate upon it, dear Jessie."

"I wish Bertie would come in, Anna; you have been very good in bearing with my waywardness; *you* are very patient. Is that Herbert's step?"



"No."

"Let him first get comfortable, Jessie; I daresay he is quite anxious to be with you."

"What is the time, Anna?"

"Ten o'clock; the clouds are disappearing, and a few bright twinkling stars are visible, peeping down at us."

"*Your* face looks so peaceful and happy, Anna."

"Does it, Jessie; why should it be otherwise? I know and am persuaded that God is able to keep me in perfect peace, because I trust in Him."

Anna's deep voice was awed as she spoke so confidently, and Jessie's blue eyes grew darker as she compared her own feeble faith so easily shaken with the settled, calm, and firm reliance of her friend; but she hears Herbert, and starts up as Anna quits the room.

Herbert's arms are thrown around Jessie with exclamations of rapture, and joyful words of endearment. As the young couple sit with hands clasped, Jessie's timidity vanishes, and her voice rings sweetly in Herbert's ears:

"O Bertie, I think I ought to be angry with you for venturing out in the storm!"

"Ah! Jessie, Jessie, if I had not?"

Jessie looked down and hesitated. Herbert softly repeated his question.

Jessie looked at him, saying, "I don't know, Bertie."

Mr. Mortimer stifled a sigh as he said, "Three days passed away, and I was determined the fourth should find me near you."

"I am so very glad to see you, Bertie."

Her beautiful eyes met his, expressing perfect happiness; but neither said a word of thankfulness to Him who had granted renewed joy to them. The next morning Jessie rose early, though she had slept but two hours.

At the door she met Mr. Mortimer, who said, "Jessie, come for a stroll; the air is very fresh and delightful; but the ground is damp."

They were soon wandering along the beach, clambering over rocks and laughing merrily. Jessie voice was suddenly quieted, by Herbert observing that his horse, which had so bravely borne him along the previous night, was looking very queer. He feared he would not be able to ride him into town; that of his groom was in the same condition.

"Where are they? you, Bertie, will of course stay here to-day, and let Piet return alone."

"No, Jessie, I promised to be back at ten o'clock this morning."

"But how will you get back, Bertie?"

"Garton has promised to give me a lift, so I must be off after breakfast."

"Yes, at least stay to breakfast: if you could but remain for once, we could pass such a happy day together, Bertie."

"I am certain we could, darling. I am sure you are aware how gladly I would stay with you, had I not told my uncle I would certainly return to-day. You would not have me break my word; so there's an end of it, eh, Jessie?"

"Yes, of course, Herbert."

"Now, we must make the most of our time. By-the-bye, Jessie, how much longer do you mean to remain here? I find time dull enough without your bright presence to cheer me at intervals."

Jessie's face was clouded at the commencement of Herbert's speech; but it changed considerably as he proceeded. In less than an hour Mr. Mortimer had gone.

As the party dispersed after breakfast, Mr. Garton, senior, declared that he was surprised by his young friend's perseverance and bravery, after the perils of the preceding night; he fancied that

his uncle would willingly have spared him for at least one whole day."

"So *I* think. Mr. Hopley would I am sure have overlooked his non-appearance to-day. Mortimer is too particular."

"But, Albert, Mr. Mortimer is expected to-day, having promised that he would not fail to be in town at or before ten o'clock," Anna remarked, gravely.

"O, I daresay; well, he is a most energetic fellow, determined not to be behind any of us in money-making!"

Jessie listened rather abstractedly, as the conversation continued. Anna was noticing how grave and sad her face was becoming. She at last caught Jessie's eyes directed towards her, and Anna smiled cheerfully; but the blue eyes drooped in a sorrowful fashion, and Anna silently marvelled.

Mr. Garton, senior, soon after sprang up briskly, as the horses were brought to the door, saying, "Now, young gentlemen, let us follow in the steps of our excellent example, Mortimer."

"All secure, father," cried Albert, laughing.

The others instantly commenced preparations, simulating an effort at exertion, which did not

blind Anna to the fact that real energy was wanting.

"I wonder," inquisitively remarked the young stranger, Mr. L. Danvers, "that you young ladies are not too timid to remain without a male protector in this place."

"Timid! my daughter disdains fear of any kind, sir."

"O! papa, dear," laughingly answered Anna, "I am not quite a soldier."

"You have a stout heart, my dear girl, and I admire you for it."

"I, for one, feel confident that Miss Garton is able to take care of herself."

"Thanks, Mr. Dousin, I hope I am."

"As well as your sisters and friend?" queried the gentleman.

"Certainly sir; what do you mean?"

"Do not misunderstand me, Mr. Garton: I am but a traveller in these parts, and not conversant with the manners and customs here."

"Ah! well; good-bye, girls. I think, Anna, little Hetty is already improved in looks. Now, Jan, move off."

The farewells being over, all the gentlemen mounted except Sidney Garton, who whispered,

"I say, Anna, why did not you make more of that delicious jam before you left?"

"You rogue," said his sister, smiling, "surely you have not finished all that I left for you."

"Make some more, Anna, *do*; good opportunity, now, plenty of time out here, eh?"

Waiving his hand gaily, Sidney galloped after the others. His sister watched the group until she was unable to see the slightest sign of the party, and then turned back into the house.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## JESSIE AND ANNA.

“**D**EAR Jessie, I think you have not appeared thoroughly happy since you came here.” Anna drew Jessie near to her as she spoke.

Pity and surprise were blended in Anna's calm countenance, for she concluded if Jessie were miserable, something radically wrong must be at work. Jessie, with her fond, indulgent parents, whose wealth was used for her comfort and benefit in every imaginable shape—Jessie, with a happy, luxurious home and surroundings, so elevating and suitable for the cultivation of taste and intellect—Jessie, with an ardent, handsome, highly-educated lover, who considered her well-nigh perfect: Herbert, whose industry, prudence, and uprightness of conduct gave general satisfaction—his future positively good by the fact of his being heir to the wealth of his father's friends: what could distress Jessie, who was acknowledged to be as amiable as she was beautiful? Half leading,

almost carrying her into the house, Anna placed her on a sofa, and, though longing to ask, would not intrude, hoping that Jessie would allude to the cause of her grief. She presently remarked—

“Do you think if I left you and kept all quiet, that you could sleep?”

“No, Anna ; stay with me, please.”

“I will do so with pleasure, but I want you to look like yourself. Are you feeling happier now?”

“No, Anna, I have not been quite happy the last fortnight.”

“Indeed, Jessie? I am very sorry to hear this.”

“Show me, Anna, how to be really contented.”

“You ask such a question, dear Jessie !”

“Oh ! Anna, yes, I am trying, but fear not in the right manner ; I do not succeed with all I do to attain a quiet frame of mind. What shall I do, Anna ?”

“Look away from yourself—take a full and trusting hold of the Author and Giver of peace and happiness ; ‘with Him is no variableness nor shadow of turning.’”

“But, Anna, suppose I am not willing to look away from myself—suppose I love everything here in preference to God and Heaven ?”

“Jessie, dear,” said Anna gravely, “I see that you are excited : pray talk calmly.”



“I wish so to do, Anna ; but I think my heart and affections are all centred in—— ”

“Hush, Jessie ; I entreat you not to indulge such weeping. God certainly requires and deserves our first and best love.”

“I have often fancied I was a real Christian, Anna ; a little probing, however, and some conversation with Mrs. Lawson startled me, and ever since, at various intervals, I have found out so much in my conduct that is opposed to what should be the result of a real conversion to God, that I am frightened at my own obduracy. How can I be confirmed—feeling as I do now ? I must not—dare not. You do not speak, dear Anna : please tell me of what you are thinking.”

“I was thinking if those whom you idolize were to cause you great grief, or if God in His wisdom chose to remove those who have His place in your thoughts and affections—what then ? ”

Jessie grew pale and shivered as she met Anna’s gaze, but she remained silent, while Anna proceeded gently—

“Dear Jessie, we must not convert our blessings and our joys into causes of vexation and trouble. All that surrounds us, as well as all we may possess, we know to be gifts that are at God’s disposal, and certainly He will have us use them

for His glory as well as for our own comfort and pleasure."

"Oh! Anna, I look for happiness and joy to those who are dear to me on earth, and forget to acknowledge God as the Giver of all."

"Dear Jessie, you believe that God gives all things; then has He not the greatest right to your gratitude and hearty service?"

"Yes, Anna, yes, I know that what you say is true."

"Then why remain so downcast, Jessie? You have only to ask sincerely and earnestly for strength to walk in the way of holiness and peace."

"Oh, Anna, I do not often pray from my heart: I could not last night: although I knew that Herbert was in God's keeping, I could not feel submissive."

"God does not expect too much from us; He promises strength from day to day."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Amy, who came with a message to her sister, and then eagerly asked if she might remain with Miss Grainger.

"No, Amy dear, I think Jessie would prefer being alone."

"Yes, for a short time, Amy."

The sisters accordingly quitted the room together.

Amy looked up into Anna's face, and anxiously enquired—

“Is Miss Grainger ill?”

“I trust not, Amy. You had better go and keep Hetty company.”

“I would rather stay with you; Hetty is playing with her dolls.”

“But, dear Amy, she will think you unkind in leaving her alone.”

“I will go and ask her to come in here—eh, Anna?”

“Yes, do, dear.”

Anna attended to various duties, and was then surprised by the non-appearance of her young sisters.

“Oh! Anna, I was so frightened!” exclaimed Amy, entering, and almost carrying her sister. “Hetty has fallen and hurt her knees so very much: I could not leave her to call you.”

Hetty was immediately wrapped in her sister's arms, while tenderest words of pity were spoken, and the delicate child soothed most lovingly.

“Cruel Anna, to leave you so long! Are you better now, dear?—no pain?”

“Yes, Anna, here—and here,” said the little girl, pointing with trembling fingers, as she spoke, to several bruises.

"My poor Hetty! let me carry you into the next room, and see what can be done to give you relief."

Jessie Grainger, left to herself, had fallen into a troubled sleep, and was roused by the entrance of the sisters. She left the sofa, and exclaimed—

"What is it, Anna? what is the matter?"

"Hush! Jessie, do not be alarmed; our poor Hetty has had a fall, and I was obliged to disturb you, as I want something to apply to the bruises. Do you feel refreshed?"

"Not much, Anna. Let me assist poor Hetty."

In the course of the afternoon, Jessie, who was wandering about, caught Anna's eyes, which were fixed upon her. She asked for some light employment.

"Would you like a walk with Amy in search of shells? I am sure the fresh air will make you look and feel brighter. I would like to join you, but I dare not leave Hetty; she seems feverish."

Jessie and Amy walked slowly down to the shore, the latter having a very silent companion. Jessie listened passively, and replied at first indifferently, until her attention was roused by some of Amy's singular remarks and questions.

"Miss Grainger, I should like to die soon after I am confirmed,—while I am young."

"Would you, Amy?" said Jessie wonderingly.

"Yes, very much. I do not like to think of being aged and infirm—which might be the case, I suppose, if I were to live a great many years. How beautifully calm the sea is! Yes, how pleasant it would be to have a sail. But boats and sailors are not seen here. Miss Grainger, we are all sailing through life—are we not? how differently and for how long we cannot say."

"It is best—so Mrs. Lawson thinks," said Jessie.

"But, Miss Grainger, I would like to sail faster, and so reach my destination sooner."

"Dear Amy! how strangely you talk!"

"I always think and feel more deeply in calm sunny weather, when I seem nearer Heaven—for Heaven is calm—and you know, Miss Grainger, I am delicate, and always was so."

"But, Amy, you would surely prefer to be strong and healthy, and enjoy yourself as other girls do."

"No, no; I am accustomed to be alone—to think and read: I do not desire many companions."

As the young ladies were returning just before dusk—rather tired, though with bright eyes and cheeks tinted by exercise—they stopped, listening to distant voices.

"Oh!" cried Amy joyfully, "I am certain that I hear papa's voice. Do not you, Miss Grainger?"

"I certainly do hear voices. Let us hasten."

At the door, dismounting, they beheld Mr. Garton and his second son, Sidney.

"Is not Albert come, papa?"

"No, my dear," replied her father; "Albert will be here to-morrow."

"I am much disappointed, papa."

"Well, dear, there were attractions elsewhere: he received an invitation from the Rollachs. Sidney was to have gone."

"Yes, but catch me going there, if I can help it! Fancy, Anna—a party on Friday last—another to-night. Gay—are they not?"

"Why would you not go with Albert?"

"Because I preferred to come here with my father, to see you all. Got anything very good to eat, Anna?"

"Is that always the uppermost idea, Sid?"

"Not exactly—only at present. Long ride, you know—appetite keen," laughed the lad merrily, watching his sister's dexterous hands as they moved over the table, arranging and assisting the attendant with the various articles which were being placed thereon.

Mr. Garton, Jessie, and Amy were standing a little distance off—the two young ladies, apparently, listening to a tale of Mr. Garton's successes


during the day. Jessie was a vexed listener, as the hope of a missive from Mr. Mortimer became more improbable.

"No note for me?" at last whispered Jessie, as they all drew drew near the table.

"No, my dear. I saw Mr. Mortimer a few hours ago, looking quite fagged. I hope he is not overdoing it."

## CHAPTER XV.

## HOME.

“ H! my darling, welcome home. Where is mamma? Let me consider; she is in the garden, I think.”

Mr. Grainger rang the bell, and desired that Mrs. Grainger should be informed that her presence was required. He then turned his loving gaze upon his daughter, who was leaning on his arm.

“I think that after to-day I shall not give leave of absence to you for a considerable time.”

“Absence gives such a relish for home and you, papa; but I wish to go and find mamma.”

“No, no, I cannot spare you yet, darling.”

“Why, papa, how selfish you are growing,” replied Jessie, laughing.

She was lavish with kisses, until she heard the door opening, which revealed Mrs. Grainger, when she sprang forward and was clasped right joyfully in her mother’s arms, whose eyes were intently scanning Jessie’s blooming cheeks.



"Well, dear, are you glad to be at home again?"

"Quite delighted, mamma: don't I look radiant?"

"You must not expect *me* to flatter you; your papa does that sufficiently."

"Ah!" laughed Mr. Grainger, advancing, "my rose-bud is gratified by papa's flattery."

"Of course, I am, papa; I expect it from you."

"Jessie, do not talk so foolishly."

"Now, mamma, you darling sweet emblem of decorum, you are surely aware that papa and I have agreed to spoil each other without molestation!"

"Nonsense, Jessie," replied Mrs. Grainger. "How are Anna and the children?"

"Anna is well, mamma; her sisters better."

"Who came home with you, Jessie?" inquired her mother; but Jessie's reply was delayed by a query from her papa.

"I beg your pardon, mamma, papa is again teasing me. We all got down from the waggon at Mr. Garton's door. Herbert and Sidney Garton walked up to our gate with me."

"Herbert! Why how came he to be at the Gartons?"

"Herbert was on horseback, mamma. He met us a long way out of town; he left his horse and came on with me. That is all, I think, mamma. Do you intend to call upon Anna, to-day?"

"No, not to-day. Now, Jessie, come and put away your things."

"Yes, mamma, directly. I suppose you did not see Herbert very often?"

"No, dear; I think he entirely renounced society during your absence. It was remarked that he appeared singularly melancholy and *distrained*."

"Now, papa, how dare you interfere?" exclaimed Jessie, whose cheeks were glowing.

"Who is at the gate, Eliza?" asked Mr. Grainger, walking up to the open door, and then, without waiting for a reply, he continued addressing his wife, who had risen and stood near her husband.

"Mortimer, I declare! and looking as grave as I ever saw him."

"Who is coming, papa," inquired Jessie, advancing. Her eyes soon discovered, and she turned pale, as she exclaimed, "Herbert, what is the matter?"

Taking Jessie's hands, Mr. Mortimer remarked sadly, "I am very sorry, dear Jessie, to make the

first day of your return cloudy; but I have brought mournful tidings. My dear guardian and best friend is dead!"

"What do you say, Mortimer?" exclaimed Mr. Grainger, "can it be true?"

"It is too true; he was found lying back in his chair, apparently dozing; in reality—dead!"

Many questions and sorrowful lamentations were uttered by the Graingers, as they listened to Mortimer's account of the sudden death of Mr. Hopley. After a time they separated, Jessie walking down the path to the gate with Herbert, whose fine countenance was indeed remarkably grave and thoughtful, excepting when he turned his eyes to Jessie, who was endeavouring to perform the part of comforter.

"I cannot stay any longer, dear Jessie. My poor aunt, my bereaved friend! they were so deeply attached, so devoted to each other. I feel thoroughly upset, and scarcely know what to do: and yet, I suppose, I ought to remain with my aunt. Is it not remarkable, that for the last week I have been left so much alone, during my uncle's visit to his friends, so much depending upon me as the principal of the establishment—*now*, I am indeed alone! His kind voice and cheerful presence will never again brighten the office which has

known him so long; but how great the change for my aunt! How will *she* endure the solitude of home, without her kind and pleasant partner?"

"O! Albert," ejaculated Jessie, in a piteous tone, and striving not to weep; for she called to memory the conversation with Mrs. Lawson, who had asked how she would bear the removal of one who had become an idol in her affections; and Jessie had mentally answered, "Murmuringly, repiningly; for I have not learnt submission."

Mr. Mortimer did not approve of Jessie's tears, and he therefore spoke more cheerfully: "Now, darling Jessie, I am making you miserable. Do not weep; yet I like to see that you really sympathise with me."

"Who will comfort poor Mrs. Hopley?" asked Jessie.

"She will know how to bear her loss," answered Herbert, "she has many friends. Now go indoors, little trembler; for I must be off, though I shall be sure to come back in time for tea."

"Do if you possibly can." She turned and walked away.

After a moment's thought, Herbert bounded after her, fearing he had spoken too gravely.

"What was it that displeased you?"

"Nothing, Herbert."

"The fact is, Jessie, I do not like that you should see any fault in me."

"Dear Herbert, I do not wish to be or to do anything but what you would admire."

"Then, dear Jessie, we shall always be happy. I think you can spare me now?"

"I am aware that you must go, now; but come to tea."

A smile of peace and happiness overspread their faces; and they parted. As Jessie walked slowly up the steps, her mother's voice reached her:

"I wish you would come in, Jessie; what a long time you two have been chatting. Herbert told us he was anxious to return home."

"Mamma was young a few years ago, darling," said her father, smiling.

"Yes, indeed, papa; but she forgets to make allowance for others."

"Jessie, I have a note for you from Mrs. Lawson."

"Thank you, mamma; I am very glad." Jessie immediately opened and commenced reading it. After a long silence, Mrs. Grainger spoke:

"Well, how gravely you are looking at that note. What does Mrs. Lawson say?"

"I never now feel happy long," was Jessie's sad remark.

"What do you say?" asked her mother, in extreme surprise.

"O! mamma, I have not been thinking about my Confirmation; and in two days hence ——"

"You are not expected to be always thinking about it," said her mother. "Tell me of Mrs. Lawson."

Jessie rose and placed the note in her mother's hands. Mrs. Grainger read as follows:—

"My very dear Jessie,—I sincerely hope that you are feeling refreshed by the sea breezes, and when we again meet I shall hope to see you looking far brighter than you did when I left George. I am gratefully enjoying and deriving great benefit from the change of air. I have been thinking very much of you lately; and I do hope that the solemn service in which you will shortly join as a candidate for Confirmation may be the means of enlightening your path for real Christianity. I have endeavoured to show you that true vital religion is far different from the mere form thereof. I am not able to tell you how truly and anxiously I long for your thorough conversion. Let it not be lip service with you; but

a hearty dedication of your life to Him, whose child you are by adoption. Rest assured you have the hearty prayers and fondest wishes of

“Your attached friend and governess,

“LUCY LAWSON.”

Mrs. Grainger looked up when she had finished reading the above note, and to her amazement she saw Jessie weeping. Mrs. Grainger's religion was very precise in the form thereof—the very thing against which Mrs. Lawson had written. This kept Mrs. Grainger silent for a short time.

“Mamma,” asked Jessie, “is it not a beautiful and kind note?”

Her mother replied, “Very earnest and affectionate, Jessie, though too severe; that is all. What has she seen in your conduct to accuse you of insincerity?”

“I fancy that Mrs. Lawson considers me very unsettled in my opinions. I think she is a *real* Christian, mamma.”

“Remember, Jessie, she has been a minister's wife. She is unquestionably a good creature. I hope and believe that I also am a Christian, though not so over particular as is Mrs. Lawson. I never felt harassed and miserable as you appear

to be, and I went through the Confirmation Service to the entire satisfaction of all."

"Ah! mamma, if I could feel sure that I were in earnest, I might, perhaps, look less downcast."

"You are not, I hope, an unbeliever; do you not know your own mind?"

"Dear mamma, I desire to be candid and truthful; perhaps, if I were to be tried by trouble or disappointment, I could better understand if I am sincere."

"Jessie, you appal me! Are you looking for troubles? What can you mean? I shall speak to your papa. You had better have a long rest; dress, and come down to dinner."



## CHAPTER XVI.

MRS. HOPLEY AND MR. MORTIMER.

THE early dinner hour found Mr. Mortimer the only occupant of the room to-day; he had not met Mrs. Hopley since the previous day: now, though he scarcely expected to see her, he turned each time the door was opened, hoping that his gentle aunt might enter. He glanced at the viands which had been cooling fully five minutes, and then at the vacant chairs, especially at that which used to be occupied by his uncle:

"I cannot sit down, I will tell Karel to clear the table."

Mrs. Hopley's sudden appearance and her loving touch, made a striking impression upon the desponding Herbert. How altered was her countenance through grief! He was shocked, and would have led her to a sofa, but she shook her head as though unable to utter a word.

"Do stay, dear friend: I am so glad you have not forgotten me. I wish you could be prevailed upon to remain."

"No, Herbert, not to-day; I did not forget you: begin your dinner."

"I would first offer something to you: will you not partake of refreshment?"

"No, not now, I have had a cup of tea; come to the table, for I cannot remain with you many minutes."

But Herbert did not move, and Mrs. Hopley continued,

"I cannot yet realize this most sudden bereavement. O Herbert, I left your uncle but a few moments ere I was recalled, then he was dead!"

"Dear Mrs. Hopley!"

"No, do not call me Mrs. Hopley: I consider that you are now more than ever dear to me, and I prefer to hear the familiar name of aunt from your lips. How proud was your uncle of your affectionate attentions, and how we shall both miss him! how shall I bear existence without his presence?"

"Dear aunt, you know separation must come sooner or later: I will strive to do all in my power to assist, comfort, and protect you."

"Thanks, my dear nephew; I do not doubt that you will. Now I must leave you, for I need repose and strength."

Herbert tenderly led his aunt from the room

to the door of her sleeping apartment, when embracing him fondly, she left him. Herbert re-entered the dining-room with mingled feelings. He concluded that Jessie would not be sorry to have him with her, accordingly he determined after a short repose he would wend his way to that abode where mind as well as body would be refreshed. Herbert experienced a feeling of certainty that a change was approaching through the death of his uncle, and that change was pleasant to his meditative mood, and kept back his naturally great sorrow. The grief and the heat produced drowsiness, and Herbert slept.

"Why, I've been in dreamland!" exclaimed Mr. Mortimer some hours after, as he rose, stretched himself and smiled, then looked at his watch, and in surprise ejaculated, 'Six o'clock!' Swiftly, and with a look of vexation he hastily attired himself for the visit that he intended to have made much earlier. Sleep had entirely consumed the bright afternoon which he intended to pass with Jessie. Being a brisk walker he expected to be in time for the evening repast at the Graingers. It proved so; they were all watching for him. Jessie went to meet him, saying,—

"Just in time, Herbert; you have been busy as usual, I suppose?"

"I am glad to be in time, dear Jessie," said Herbert, evading her question; he would not then disclose to her conduct to him so unprecedented. She did not notice it, too well-pleased was she to see his eyes fixed on her with such joyful greeting. After tea they walked in the grounds, Herbert endeavouring to make amends by being doubly affectionate and agreeable. Jessie was sober and quiet as they strolled about, which Herbert noticed, and remarked gently,—

"Do not be troubled, Jessie; you must not grow *too* sensitive over every unwelcome sorrow. I saw my aunt, she looks well; she came and stayed with me a short time. She was as loving and kind to me as my own mother would have been. Bless her; indeed, Jessie, I like to have her near me; she is certainly the sweetest specimen of an elderly lady that I have ever seen."

"I shall be jealous, Herbert," said Jessie, smiling.

"*You will?* I should like to see you so," replied Herbert. "I hope you will come and spend an afternoon with my aunt soon after the funeral."

"I? oh no; mamma had better go, Herbert."

"But I wish *you* to come. I shall be so very glad to see you there, dear Jessie; and I know that Mrs. Hopley is prepared to see you in a

most attractive light, for I have not been backward in speaking of you whenever an opportunity occurred."

"Is Mrs. Hopley a real Christian?" asked Jessie, musingly.

"A real Christian! what do you mean? we are all Christians, and real ones too, I hope."

Jessie sighed, and then said in a low tone, "I think, Herbert, there must be a great difference in *being* one, and merely *appearing* one."

"Certainly, I know we are not so good as we might be, still if we mean what we say at prayers and in church——"

"You mean if we really desire what we pray for?" said Jessie.

"I for one," said Herbert, "think that if there be irreligious persons, it is because they prefer to be such."

"Of course, Bertie."

"But, Jessie, I cannot think why you trouble yourself at all upon the subject; surely, religion ought to allow persons to be at peace. I do not like to see your face so *very* serious. I am not bright and cheerful to-day. Let us try to be more like ourselves." Jessie was silent, though she smiled, and they took possession of a favourite seat near to some beds of flowers.

"What a lovely evening! the air so fragrant with the perfume of roses, verbenas, and mignonette. What a queer world this would be if flowers were not one of its chief adornments. I mean to have a superb garden of my own some day, and that time is not, I hope, very far distant. I shall have also a conservatory; I intend most of my time to be passed with *you* in my garden."

Jessie's smiles came pleasantly for a time; soon her mother's voice reached her ears, and she rose, saying, as she received a hat and light shawl,

"Thank you, mamma."

"I thought you would not notice the sunset, the mist enveloping you and the damp grass," said her mother.

"I am warm mamma, and quite comfortable: are there any visitors indoors?"

"No; but would you not do well to come in? Papa has been asking for you, and of course wants music."

"Very well, mamma."

"How prudent we shall be when we reach your mother's age," said Herbert, smiling.

Jessie replied, "As if mamma was very old!" Then after a pause she remarked, "How strange to die suddenly, as your dear uncle did. Do you

think he had an idea of the change? Did he not try to move?"

"I think not: uncle and aunt were together a few minutes before, talking cheerfully. She left the room for something, but in less than ten minutes she was re-called by Karel, and when she again looked upon my uncle he was dead! When I reached home, I went into his room, and found him looking exactly as though he were in a sweet sleep. Dear kind man! I hoped and never doubted that he would live to see me married; *now*, that will never be!"

"Herbert, was Mr. Hopley subject to fits?"

"I believe not, he was always in robust health and excellent spirits. The heart was affected I suppose—such a noble heart it was! But, dear Jessie, we must take your mamma's advice, and get out of the mist, which may do you more harm than good—come."

## CHAPTER XVII.

## AMY GARTON.

THE next afternoon Jessie walked to the Gartons. Amy was alone, and looked delighted to see her friend, through the open window. Jessie went in, the door being open, and Amy sprang forward, exclaiming, "I am so very glad to see you, Miss Grainger!"

"Are you, Amy? and how are you?" asked Jessie, pleasantly.

"I feel well, but am rather excited. Anna went with Hetty to White Fountain. I did not wish to go, it was so hot; so I sat down with my Testament, and have been reading this beautiful chapter—10th of St. John. I have always felt glad that I loved Jesus; but since I began to prepare for Confirmation, I find so many wrong actions in my daily life, that I begin to fear I do not love Jesus with my whole heart."

Jessie Grainger to be compelled to listen to such a confession! What could *she* say in the way of advice?



"Amy, dear," at last said Jessie, very humbly, "why do not you speak to Anna?"

"I do when I am perplexed. 'If ye love Me,' Jesus must have known that *all* would not love Him. I hope, Miss Grainger, that *we* mean to try and do so. He did not say that we should find it difficult: it ought to be easy obedience to us, because it must proceed from our love. I do so wish to be one of those earnest Christians who dearly love Jesus; indeed I do!"

Amy then proposed that they should sing, and requested Jessie to play the accompaniment.

Rather surprised at the request, Jessie advanced to the pianoforte, and played the tune to the favourite hymn—"Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear."

They were not disturbed until they were finishing the last verse, when they heard voices and footsteps approaching. First, Miss Garton entered, leading her young sister,—followed, to Jessie's great astonishment, by Mrs. Lawson. The greetings on both sides were most warmly given and received.

"Dear Mrs. Lawson!" cried Jessie, holding her friend's hand, "I am as much pleased as surprised to see you here so unexpectedly."

"Are you, my dear? I arrived not an hour ago. Your mamma told me I should probably

find you here ; and having a strong desire to see Miss Garton, as well as her sisters, I hurried off and met Anna a short distance from the gate. But you and Amy were singing, and I hope we were not the cause of your stopping so abruptly."

"No, Mrs. Lawson, we had just concluded the last verse as you entered the room."

"How is it, Amy, that you appear so flushed ? you ought to have been in the garden."

"I did not care to go out, Anna ; I was so glad Miss Grainger came."

"You do not look so well as I expected to see you, Jessie, after your sojourn at the Bay," remarked Mrs. Lawson.

"I thought I did. Papa and mamma think I am improved."

"You are, dear, I hope, improving in spiritual things."

"I mean sincerely to try and do so," said Jessie.

"Now, dear, I think you must not again succumb to any fear or doubt ; but, as you have said, *try* with prayer, nothing doubting that you will receive all the help you may require. But I think Anna is wishing to have a chat with you, so I resign you to her charge."

"You will both remain to tea," said Anna.

"Do ; you will first come to my room and remove your bonnets and mantles."

The ladies then walked to Miss Garton's neat, cool, and airy chamber, where, after a short stay, they went to tea in the next apartment, which was large and pleasantly situated, having glass doors opening to a lawn, beyond which was a vegetable garden in a flourishing condition. Rows of fruit trees along each side for about a mile gave coolness and agreeableness to the view ; and many a ramble had the young couple among the walks and beneath the trees.

"I think this a very pretty and cheerful room," said Jessie.

"So do I," said Anna ; "I generally sit here."

"But, Anna, why do you not do so now ? Your long walk has made you pale, and you appear tired," remarked Jessie.

"I am rather tired," smilingly answered Anna, who was occupied with the preparations for tea. "I shall be able to rest contentedly when all is ready. Papa's step at last ! Amy, go and tell him who are here, and that we are waiting for him."

Mr. Garton came immediately, plucking a rose as he strode along, which he presented to Jessie,

after warmly shaking her hand, saying, "I know you are partial to roses."

"Yes, I am; but who is not?" laughingly asked Jessie. "Very few, I should say."

"Well, Mrs. Lawson, I trust you have enjoyed your visit to Blanco?"

"I have had a pleasant change, and feel much better for it. Your daughters seem much improved by their trip to Ballott's Bay."

"Yes, they do. Now, ladies—tea—a welcome beverage, and desirable refreshment also."

After they rose from the table, Mr. Garton went to his comfortable easy-chair, and prepared to enjoy himself with a cheroot; the ladies decided upon strolling out of doors for half an hour. Amy, clinging to her sister, was a silent though attentive listener to the observations of her friends, as they moved along.

"I suppose, dear Jessie, you are expecting Mr. Mortimer here presently?"

"Yes, Anna; mamma will tell him where I am."

"How is Mrs. Hopley?"

"I think she is well, though very much grieved by the loss of her husband. Herbert saw her for a few minutes yesterday. I believe she was at first unable to speak to him. He was shocked

by the alteration in her appearance; he scarcely knew what to say or do in the way of comforting her."

Mrs. Lawson's sweet pale face scanned Jessie's as she observed, "Bereavements and afflictions are necessary to purify and strengthen us in our Christian course; well for us if we be able to meet them patiently, and own the wisdom of Him who smites to heal. Patience and faith grow with us, I feel sure, if we endeavour to mould our wills and our affections to our Maker's laws."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE WIDOW'S HOME.

IT was several days after Mr. Hopley's body had been placed in St. Mark's cemetery, that Herbert and his aunt were together in the drawing-room, which apartment was warm and cheerful. The two occupants were sitting upon a sofa placed near the fire, which burned brightly. Herbert had just informed his aunt of Jessie Grainger's intended visit that afternoon, when a light step was heard at the door. Herbert immediately rose and admitted the guest, who proved to be the expected one, Jessie herself, clad in dark soft merino—the day being excessively chilly. She timidly advanced to the sofa, and was rather surprised to find she was met half way, and warmly folded in the arms of the kind and loving lady; while kisses of welcome were copiously lavished upon her, and words of pleasurable greeting spoken again and again.

"You are welcome, my dear, very welcome. Come—sit near to us. I shall not feel deserted

while you and Herbert remain in the neighbourhood. I hope you enjoyed the cool bracing air, Jessie ? ”

“ Oh, yes,” was all she could articulate, with four eyes gazing at her in perfect admiration.

“ I think a cup of tea would be beneficial to you, dear,” said Mrs. Hopley. “ Ring, Herbert, if you please,” then turning to the young girl at her side, she continued, “ I scarcely expected this gratification to-day; was your mamma willing to spare you, dear ? ”

“ Yes, mamma walked part of the way with me, she had business not far off; she will call for me by-and-bye.”

“ I will persuade her to allow you to remain with me the whole evening. Look how proud Herbert is to have you here.”

Jessie glanced at Mr. Mortimer’s animated and gratified countenance, and wondered that she had been so seldom a visitor at Mr. Hopley’s. Mrs. Hopley had tenderly assisted Jessie in removing her walking attire, and carefully helped her young companion to tea, and then inquired,

“ How old are you now, dear ? ”

“ I shall be eighteen in less than six months,” said Jessie, smiling.

“ Herbert will be twenty-four next month.

Did you not know that I feel great regard for you ? ”

“ I suspect that you viewed me in a very partial light.”

“ Do not be shy ; if you have never before been certain of it, I hope, Jessie, that you are so now. My dear kind husband enjoyed the hope of seeing you the chosen wife of our Herbert. I think, dear, you will be pleased by knowing this.”

“ Very glad,” answered Jessie, with bended head and shaded eyes ; “ thank you, Mrs. Hopley, for telling this to me,” she said, suddenly looking up with a pleased, though sober countenance.

Mrs. Hopley was not satisfied with a glance at Jessie’s beaming face ; she seemed unable to keep her eyes off the young girl. Herbert scarcely spoke, apparently quite content to look on at the affectionate familiarity of two persons so very dear to him. Mrs. Hopley was the first to speak.

“ I hope, my dear, you have not been spoiled by flattery, though most pretty girls are.”

“ But, my dear aunt,” remarked Herbert, “ you do not expect young ladies to be ignorant that they possess beauty, besides other attractions ? ”

“ Oh, no ; what displeases me is, to see them all airs and affectation, or still worse, bold, forward, and flighty.”



"To what do you ascribe the difference we see in young ladies? Compare Jessie's actions, manners, and conversation, with those of Miss Rollach, or again, take Miss Garton and Miss Freer—what a strange dissimilarity!"

"Yes, Herbert, it is very true; many other sensible persons have been struck with the unfavourable difference. I thoroughly enjoy a chat with cheerful, steady, sincere Anna Garton."

"I formerly had an exaggerated idea of her superiority," remarked Jessie, slightly smiling, "but latterly, I find as Mrs. Lawson observed, that the more intimate we become, the more I discover in her to admire and respect."

"Yes, dear," said Mrs. Hopley, bending upon Jessie a gratified look of encouragement to proceed, but she did not do so.

Mr. Mortimer soon after asked,

"Do you not think, aunt, it is rather surprising that Miss Garton has not married?"

"Strange? why, my dear Herbert?"

"Well, aunt, she is one who would make a good wife; and I consider that men of taste and discernment generally hope for one of that style."

"Decidedly, they ought; but I am grieved to know that men of discernment make sad mistakes in the selection of a wife."

"Well, well," said Herbert, smiling complaisantly ; "with some men love is blind, therefore due allowance must be made for the sufferer."

"By all means," Mrs. Hopley gently replied.

"There is mamma !" said Jessie.

"You are not tired of *me*, I will not say of *us*, Jessie ?"

"Oh, no, Mrs. Hopley."

"I should very much like to keep you here always, my dear. I mean to borrow you sometimes to keep me company, your bright face would enliven my sad heart. Although striving to be resigned, my poor frail nature so often rebels."

"Dear aunt, allow me to say, that you can reflect with infinite pleasure upon many years of past happiness. My kind, indulgent uncle and friend, for whom we mourn, was truly deserving of our love and esteem."

Mrs. Hopley rose and left the apartment. Mr. Mortimer and Jessie remained silent and grave for some time.

"Dear, good creature !" exclaimed Herbert, "I am so pleased with the way she has welcomed you, Jessie. I felt confident you would make an impression that would be *durable*, and I am not disappointed. In fact, I do not see very well,

how she or any person could help falling in love with such a rose-blossom ! ”

• “Hush ! you will make me insufferably vain, if you do not more sparingly use your extravagant encomiums. I shall be obliged after this to sing my own praises, should I see the smallest sign on your part of forgetfulness ! ”

“My darling, I shall not permit or sanction such a proceeding.”

“I really desire to a brave and noble woman, and must rely upon you for assistance in becoming one.”

For which remark, Mr. Mortimer replied with great satisfaction,

“You are immensely pleasing as you are.”

“But, Herbert, this is surely not the way to help me in doing right,” answered Jessie, sadly.

“I do not know why you talk or think about altering, when I tell you I see no necessity for anything of the kind,” laughingly replied Herbert.

“I am very sorry, Bertie, that you will talk to me as if I were a little girl, instead of conversing with me as a sensible woman ! ”

“Fie, darling Jessie ! how can you imagine that I do so ? ”

The entrance of Mrs. Hopley and Mrs. Grainger prevented any further remark from Jessie ; con-

vinced and pleased as she was by Herbert's unconcealed and proud love of herself. Jessie fancied there was something wanting: Mr. Mortimer sprang from his seat, and with his usual deferential respect, placed chairs near to the fire for Mrs. Hopley and Mrs. Grainger: standing by with a smile and pleased expression, as the ladies glanced at him with undisguised admiration. The conversation then became general.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## MINA'S RETURN.

THE evening of the day before her Confirmation Jessie Grainger was passing in her chamber rather distractedly: she could not bring her mind into a sufficiently serious mood, and was consequently restless and ill at ease.

"Shall I always feel thus? my thoughts seem to have their own way generally. My feelings!—Well—I certainly have a desire to improve. Must I solemnly declare that I will strive against all that is contrary to God's law and will? How noble! I should not rest satisfied until I feel resolutely striving to adhere to those vows which it is considered necessary for young persons to make. I must peruse again that book which Mrs. Lawson so kindly lent to me. Jessie read a portion of it; and hearing the garden gate close, she approached the window and perceived with evident pleasure that the visitor was Mina, bright rose-cheeked Mina Beyers, who had been on a visit to some relatives. On hearing that Mrs.

Grainger was not at home, Mina immediately ran up to her friend, and the girls affectionately embraced, Jessie exclaiming,—

“How dared you go away without my permission? I am very glad that you have returned; how well you look, Mina.”

“I asked mamma to let me go on a long-promised visit to my cousins,” replied Mina.

“How could all at home spare you? Allow me to remove your hat: you can stay to partake of tea with us, Mina?”

“I should like to do so, but I promised that I would return to help the children.”

“When did you arrive?”

“Only about two hours ago. I wanted to take a peep at you before night, so I ran part of the way over the fields.”

“Have you enjoyed the trip?”

“Yes, I like my aunt—my cousins are very kind, they asked me to stay longer.”

“Now, you are, I suppose, glad to be at home again?”

“Yes, mamma wants me very much.”

“Plenty of work ready, I suppose, for your busy fingers, poor Mina?”

“Why poor? Miss Jessie.”

"Why *Miss* Jessie?" asked her friend in a merry tone.

"I forgot: pardon me, Jessie."

"I will not, if you again so address me; are we not old friends?"

"Are Mr. and Mrs. Grainger well, also Mr. Mortimer?"

"Yes, dear Mina, all quite well. You must come to our Church to-morrow to see me confirmed, will you?"

"I wish mamma may allow me—at what time?"

"Half-past six in the evening. I think you can come here, and we will walk together."

"Yes, please."

"O! Mina! I wish to-morrow were past, and all the excitement over."

"Is Confirmation a very solemn affair, Jessie?"

"Yes, Mina," replied Jessie gravely; it is so to me. Fancy all the vows and promises I must make! and I feel so weak and helpless. I am determined to try and lead a holy life, like some of the eminent persons whose biographies we used to read to Mrs. Lawson; do you remember?"

"Yes, I do; they were so wonderfully good. I think, Jessie, you are too grave and frightened."

"Do you really think that I am too much troubled about the matter?"

"Dear Jessie, you know I am not sufficiently clever to advise. If you really intend to do right God will help you."

"Yes, so Mrs. Lawson tells me. Mina, you have not told me enough about your late visit, and what you used to do."

"We were very merry in the old farmhouse, Jessie. I was bridesmaid to one of my cousins, and there were so many persons staying there for a fortnight after the wedding. Frederica is the favourite daughter, and also the prettiest, I thought. We used to ride in the morning, and every evening there were dancing and music. I was quite tired at last. I helped my aunt to make cakes and preserves for the company, while the poor fat cook attended to the huge oven. Uncle, aunt, and cousins wished me to stay altogether; but I was sure mamma would require me at home; and now papa is gone for four months."

"You are so clever and useful in household duties, I do not wonder your mother is unwilling to let you leave home. I wish *my* mamma would allow me to do things in the house. I can make a few sorts of jam; but as for plain cooking, I am utterly ignorant of it. Were I to be poor, what a bad housekeeper I should make!"

"Dear Jessie, your mamma does not like that



you should spoil your pretty hands; and you will not be poor, so you need not trouble yourself about hard work."

"But I think I ought to know how to do everything, so that I could properly direct my servants. I shall ask you some day to show me how you make those delicious milk-buns, which you are so kind as to give me, because you know I like them better than any I can procure in the town."

After an hour had passed, Jessie remarked, "What a pleasant long chat we have had, Mina: do come again to-morrow morning, and we will have a long stroll together. I see that you are now anxious to return home, so I will not press you to stay; but do not fail to ask your mamma to spare you to-morrow."

"Yes, I will ask her, for I shall be delighted to come."

"Stay, I will walk with you to the gate; here are some lovely dahlias, let me give you a few. Good-bye, you busy bee."

"Good evening, young ladies," said a voice as the girls were separating: "beautiful weather, is it not?"

"Good evening, Mr. Garton; you startled Mina by appearing so suddenly. Are you coming in?"

"Thanks, no; I am waiting about for a friend. I did not intend to frighten anyone," said Mr. Garton, trying to laugh unconcernedly. Miss Beyers evidently wished to cut me entirely, for she did not even acknowledge my greeting: she looks well after her sojourn in the country."

"Yes, she does."

"How is little Hetty this evening?"

"I think Anna said she was better. I was in a great hurry, having an engagement with Danvers; here he comes; I think you are acquainted?"

"Yes, slightly," replied Jessie, as Mr. Danvers walked up and greeted her with unconcealed pleasure. Jessie was turning to leave the gentleman, when another voice and step arrested her progress, and she quietly stood at a little distance from the group, and waited.

"How are you, Danvers? Glad to see you. When did you arrive?"

"Ah! Mortimer, how are you?"

"Oh, quite well. When did you arrive?"

"Last night. I shall make a very short stay, meaning to be off again to-morrow for Willendam."

"Well, we must manage to meet somewhere before you start."

"Certainly; come in the morning, and let us have luncheon together at Dane's Hotel; now I will say good evening to you."

"Why, Jessie," Mr. Mortimer exclaimed, as he entered the garden, "are you growing smaller? I had no idea until Garton and Danvers raised their hats, that a lady was near."

"I heard your voice just as I was leaving them, so I waited for you," smilingly remarked Jessie.

"I am glad to have met Danvers again."

"I was not aware that you knew him: do you like him, Bertie?"

"Very much; why?"

"I think there is a look of insincerity about him."

"Why form an opinion of him in a minute? that is premature."

"No, I saw him at Ballott's Bay."

"Well, Jessie, you are wrong in your surmise, for he is respected, and I believe him to be a very good fellow."

"Indeed! I do not admire his manners."

"I think you form opinions too quickly, Jessie."

While Mr. Mortimer spoke, Jessie cast down her eyes, and her cheeks bore witness to an internal struggle; she walked on faster, and Mr. Mortimer, who was playing with his switch and

looking very contented, was obliged to quicken his pace. Jessie passed him, reached her chamber, and sat down. "I did not speak angrily, even when presuming to read Mr. Danvers' character aright. I have no doubt that Herbert is in a state of wonder at my retreat. Poor me, how my cheeks burn! Mamma is never put out by papa, never provoked to anger. I wish I could think before I speak! As a Christian, I shall have daily petty trials, and must strive to subdue the hasty impatience so natural to me when I am annoyed." A knock at the door caused Jessie to start; her woolly-headed little maid entered to her summons to "Come in," and viewing her mistress with surprise, exclaimed wonderingly,

"Massa Mortimer say, Please Miss Jessie, come."

"Very well, Ketty. Tell Mr. Mortimer I will come presently."

"Miss Jessie not sick?"

"No; shut the door, Ketty."

Jessie went to the glass, arranged her hair, and then walked slowly into the drawing-room, where she found Mr. Mortimer.

"What was the matter, Jessie? Something was amiss, or you would not have left me so long,—tell me what it was, you particular little rose."

"Never mind now, Herbert."

"I do, though: will you tell me at once? Call me any names you like, provided they are sweet."

"Excuse me this time, Herbert."

Jessie strove to put aside the arm which held her, but in vain; at last she said,

"I prefer to sit down, Herbert."

"No, Jessie, darling, not when *I* do not wish it," said Mr. Mortimer, looking very mischievously at her.

"Herbert, I think you are rather absurd."

"I am? but I *must* have forgiveness for this teasing, dear Jessie; come and sit near to me, and I will be your devoted and admiring slave."

## CHAPTER XX.

## CONFIRMED.

**S**T. MARK'S is the name of the small but pretty English Church at George Town, which had been completed about two years. It was capable of seating about three-hundred persons, the only beautiful window was to the left above the vestry door. It had been sent from England by a gentleman in memory of a dear departed child, whose body was laid behind the sacred edifice; and that portion of ground was well enclosed. The window represented our Redeemer with a halo round His head, carrying a lamb on one shoulder and a staff in one hand. This evening, as the hour for service drew near, many groups were seen passing along the different roads to the little church. The first four benches on the right, opposite the pulpit, were appropriated to the youths; on the left, opposite the reading desk, the same number of benches were left for the maidens, who were to be confirmed that evening. It was a pretty sight to watch the keen glances of parents resting upon cherished sons and

daughters, about to make open profession of their faith, and promise to live according to God's laws. Confirmation is a solemn and beautiful service for our eyes ; and oh ! how holy, right, and good for our hearts ! Mr. and Mrs. Grainger were seated, when Jessie with Mr. Mortimer and Miss Beyers entered. Jessie's heart was beating with expectation and fear. At length the pealing of the bells ceased. Mr. Cook closed the door, and walked gently up the aisle to the vestry door and held it open, while the Bishop, the Archdeacon, and the Curate entered and advanced to their respective seats. After the usual service, the Bishop delivered a short address, earnest, kind, and instructive, which brought tears in many eyes. At the conclusion of the service, Mr. Mortimer was waiting near the door, and Jessie clung to his arm as she sobbed out, "I feel quite sad."

"Dear Jessie, pray do not weep *now* ; you ought to be calm and contented. Let us walk slowly, for I felt the church very warm, did not you?"

"No, not too warm ! you were the bright flower among the party, Jessie."

"Did you not think, Herbert, that the Bishop's address was particularly earnest and impressive?"

"I did ; but I perceive your mother is waiting, so I think we must join her."

"Jessie dear, are you warm?" tenderly inquired her mother?

"Yes, thank you, mamma; we prefer to walk slowly."

The elders preceded them, but all reached the garden gate at the same time.

"Dear papa, I will take your right arm."

"What! exchange Herbert's for mine!" exclaimed Mr. Grainger.

"Yes; Herbert has an engagement for half-an-hour, and was obliged reluctantly to leave me: he will return early."

"Do you know who was on our bench this evening?"

"No; who, papa?"

"Young Danvers! I think he is a chum of Herbert's. Now, my darling, in-doors: the mist increases."

Three quarters of an hour slipped by ere Jessie left her chamber for the drawing-room! there she sat about five minutes, with a quiet pensive expression on her face, which was then changed to one of expectation and pleasure, as she recognised Mr. Mortimer's voice, with another laughingly replying; and immediately Mr. Mortimer and Mr. Danvers walked into the drawing-room. Jessie spoke quietly and gravely to the latter gentleman's



profuse and delighted greeting. Mr. and Mrs. Grainger entered at that moment, pleased by the prospect of knowing more intimately the clever and handsome Lawrence Danvers.

"Decidedly pleasant and sensible persons," said the latter gentleman *sotto voce*, as the evening drew to a close. "That fellow Mortimer is unquestionably a lucky chap to have the *entr  e* here!" When he rose to leave, Mr. Danvers with much energy exclaimed,

"Good-night to you, Sir; I have passed a most agreeable evening very unexpectedly! a charming subject for thought on my long journey."

"When do you start?" enquired Mr. Grainger.

"One day this week: I shall commence a long tour through many parts of the colony."

"Try to give us another evening before you start."

"I shall be delighted so to do, if possible. Good evening, Miss Grainger."

Jessie's reponse was low and grave, though she felt nearly provoked to laughter at the extremely polite and almost reverent manner in which Mr. Danvers addressed her. The gentleman left at eleven o'clock.

Jessie was weary, for the day had been trying to her.

"You look tired, my child ! Bed is now the best place for you," said her father.

Mrs. Grainger was in Jessie's room waiting for her daughter : at length, becoming impatient, she called to her,— "Jessie, do come ! who is to assist you in undressing, if you do not hasten."

"O, dear mamma, I am so glad that you can stay."

"Well, Jessie, you are shewing gladness in a new fashion—by a long silence."

"I beg your pardon, mamma ! I was thinking of the Bishop's address."

"It was very good and kind, but rather long ! I hope some of the young persons attended to it."

"I did, mamma ; I felt comforted by some part of it : being good and obedient is not very easy."

"I am sure, child, you have never been disobedient ; do not become prim and peculiar in your notions." Jessie prayed earnestly that night for wisdom and humility.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## SIX MONTHS AFTER CONFIRMATION.

**M**RS. LAWSON'S continued indisposition kept her absent for several months—during which period Jessie's studies progressed but slowly. She had been so accustomed to depend on her friend for help, that she grew negligent when not cheered and aided as hitherto;—she required one at hand to draw her out, and guide aright her vivid conceptions. To sit down in solitary quietude and deep study, she found more dreary than she had anticipated, and it was by no means pleasant to Jessie,—who preferred to roam among the flowers, singing favourite ditties, or culling nosegays for the drawing-room. The chief hindrance to study at this time arose from her mind being occupied with the future of herself and Mr. Mortimer. Her parents noticed a change in their daughter's manner, and attributed it to her sorrow at the approaching day of separation, when she would no longer be an inmate of her childhood's home—when new duties and affections would be required

of her. Mr. Mortimer gazed on her with surprise, for notwithstanding Jessie was inflexible in her desire to do what she considered to be right, she was quite as tender and sweetly considerate in her regard for his feelings; he therefore found it a puzzling task to murmur or rebel. Her quietly and softly-spoken preference for right was noble and brave, but he was far from contented; he hoped Jessie would look up to him as a superior being, ask his advice, and rely upon his decision on all points: and vowed he would never again be won over by soft, persuasive words, to a conviction of his own want of true, generous and worthy motives.

"Jessie," said Mr. Mortimer one evening as they walked together, "I have a project in my mind which I mean to disclose to you, about which I shall ask your opinion. Of course I shall not enter very deeply into the matter with you, as I am well aware you neither wish nor care to be troubled with any intricate or puzzling subject."

"Indeed, Herbert! then perhaps it would be best to decline having either ear or voice in the matter; though certainly, to please you, and if you really desire my opinion, I will give my utmost attention."

"Now, dear Jessie, I thought it would give you great satisfaction to know, that I consider your taste superior, and your talent for investigation above what your sex in general possesses."

"Thank you, Herbert; I perceive you wish that I should never forget how far above us in intellect as well as power men are, or wish to be considered."

"But, Jessie, at what are you smiling? you cannot surely deny that men ought to be superior to women in mental work."

"Why say *ought*, dear Herbert?"

"Because how absurd it would be if women ruled in intellect, and men were superior in physical strength only."

"Mental culture, and of the highest sort, can be obtained by study," remarked Jessie.

"Certainly," Mr. Mortimer replied, in a consequential tone, and drawing himself up proudly; "but, I say, that females should not be allowed to take the first place in literature and art, not even were it possible to render them competent; if you were too far advanced, Jessie, beyond me, —even in general knowledge—I could not obtain sufficient respect from you: you would not feel obliged to give in."

"I shall not forget, Herbert, that you are one

of the 'lords of the creation;' and I will always try to give honour to whom honour is due; you are needlessly alarmed, Bertie."

"I confess I am at times, dear Jessie, quite afraid lest we should differ materially for the enjoyment of social converse. I did not intend to make you look so serious, but I think you will agree with me that the gentler sex should always yield to the stronger."

"Herbert, mamma and I are going to make calls to-morrow, and we promised to lunch with the Gartons."

"What! then I shall not see you again until the evening: I must not venture a remark perhaps."

"Pray do, Bertie!"

"You smile, for you know what I would say—that I cannot willingly resign your society without regret. I ascribe this to your patience and gentleness during our conversations. But here is your papa, Jessie, so I will postpone my news."

Herbert Mortimer could not be blind to the difference in Jessie's manner—and admired, while he longed to imitate her—and became more deferential in his manner.

Mina Beyers seldom came now to see Jessie;

she found employment at her home demanded still more of her attention; her mother was very ailing; and the bright, intelligent girl was rapidly becoming a household drudge. Jessie was grieved by the change in her loving and merry friend, and vainly prophesied better days for her. Jessie's aid and sympathy were generously bestowed, and gratefully accepted; but a tinge of unusual reserve was noticed in Mina's behaviour, who owned to feeling very sad and lonely.

"Why more so now than formerly?" said Jessie.

Mina evaded a reply.

What can be the matter? thought Jessie, as she studied the countenance of her friend: I will not require her to tell me; perhaps she intends on a future day to reveal her trouble. I wonder if she can have engaged herself to one whom she knows I shall not like.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## MISS GARTON'S DISCLOSURE.

“**J**ESSIE!” exclaimed Mrs. Garton, suddenly appearing in the drawing-room, “do not mind being disturbed rather unceremoniously. Please come out here where we shall not be intruded on.”

Jessie rose surprised, and taking up her hat followed Anna down the garden to a secluded seat.

“I will not detain you any longer: Do you know much of Miss Rollach?”

“I do not, Anna; but what is the matter? you are quite pale.”

“Never mind, dear Jessie; did you ever hear her mention any of my family, as if she were likely to be connected with us?”

“No; but your brother Albert often visits there.”

“Yes,” sadly answered Anna; “but I never supposed ——; but, Jessie, can you believe it? Little Susan Rollach told Amy that her sister is



engaged to Albert. He, you know, is not in town; and papa has a great dislike to the family. I fancied, Jessie, that you knew the Rollachs more intimately than we do; so I came over to ascertain if you had heard such a rumour."

"No, Anna; but I rather expected to hear it."

"Why so?"

"I see the two so often together. I am very sorry, especially as you seem to view the matter in so grave a light."

"I do indeed, Jessie; for I fear it must be true. Susan said that her sister wears a ring which Albert gave to her. I am very sad; but will not cloud your happiness. Good-bye."

"O no, Anna; please come into my room, where you can have a rest—*do* come."

Jessie at length persuaded her friend to enter the house. Both sat silently a long time, Anna being the first to speak.

"What most distresses me is to think that my brother should have so long refrained from consulting *me*, or any of us."

"It is strange. He is probably aware that you would not look favourably upon his choice; and he will try to win your regard for her by degrees," said Jessie.

"Why, then, did he leave town without saying a word to any of us? It is to me a most incomprehensible affair; and I shall rejoice to find that it is not true."

"Be calm, dear Anna."

"Yes, I must be brave; but oh! Jessie, you cannot imagine how I should regret being compelled to call Arabella Rollach, sister!"

Anna was fairly overcome, which caused great surprise to Jessie, who sprang forward, exclaiming, "Dear Anna, all may yet prove to be well."

"It is not friendly to give a half confidence; and yet to trouble you with all my sorrow is perhaps unkind; it is a rather long story."

"I am not too young, Anna, to feel for others in their trials."

"No, dear Jessie; but it is not fair to move your sympathy about trials long past."

Jessie listened in wonder. She longed, and yet she dreaded to hear what had caused the practical, unsentimental Anna Garton to look so sad.

"Dear Jessie, I will tell my little romance. Try and come up to our house to-morrow; in the meantime, good-bye, and accept many

thanks for the kind interest you take in my affairs."

Early the next afternoon Jessie was on the road to the Gartons. She was expecting a revelation, and to be made the *confidante* of one like Anna was very gratifying to Jessie Grainger, whose heart yearned to be able to say something by which her friend's mind might regain its equilibrium. Jessie was met and conducted by Anna to a small apartment used as a study.

"I am very glad you are come early, dear Jessie; I have received a note on the subject of yesterday's conversation."

"You have, dear Anna! Well?"

"You may surmise by my face that it is all true. I will read to you my brother's letter:—

"Dear Anna,—I have been writing to my father on business, and so I could not resist the opportunity of sending a few lines to you upon a private matter of my own. Well, to begin my confession, though rather abruptly, I have engaged to marry Bella Rollach. Now Anna, I fancy I see you start and exclaim, Impossible! nevertheless try to accept the truth in a most indulgent way, as is your wont on all occasions. I particularly entreat you so to do, for you can pave the way

with our father more persuasively than it is possible for others to do. I am well aware, in the first place, how much you disapprove of the lady's manners; but bear in mind, dear sister, that there are not many of your sex so perfect as you are. There, do not say that I cannot appreciate you, although I have selected for my wife one who is so different to yourself. I shall rely on your goodness to break the news gradually at home, requesting my father will overlook any little singularities in the family to whom I am to be related.

“‘I am, your attached brother,

“‘ALBERT F. GARTON.’”

“Now, dear Jessie, help yourself to some fruit; and then come over here to the sofa, and I will briefly narrate to you how and when I first heard the name of Albert's intended. It is now five years ago that all occurred which I am going to relate. It was a very calm sultry morning. Papa, Albert, and Sidney were in the garden before going to the store. I was in the drawing-room, when I heard their voices raised in excitement, and papa calling for our man-servant. I hurried out in alarm, and there I beheld a stranger almost lying in papa's arms. Papa had just opened the

4

gate by which he was going to pass with Albert, when he was stopped by the singular conduct of a gentleman who was close to our garden wall: and as he gazed, the stranger drew nearer, and at last fell forward in the position I saw him. He was carried into Albert's room, and there he lay for a long time insensible. When at last restored to consciousness, he appeared very weak and dejected, so much so, that papa advised him to remain quiet for the day, and try to compose himself to sleep; he smiled faintly, and closed his eyes. Towards evening, papa informed me that the stranger was delirious, and that he had sent for Dr. Conwin. I was quite restless after that communication, and anxiously waited for further tidings. Before morning, our doctor told us that the stranger's life was in danger; but he battled through his disease, and in a fortnight was convalescent. Well, Jessie, Howard Percival, for this is the gentleman's name, was a long time getting well, his chair was wheeled from room to room, he was terribly thin and pale, and could scarcely walk for five minutes; we all liked him, and the children were delighted to be with him. I saw that he was constantly examining a locket which he sometimes kept in his hands, evidently forgetful of all who were present. His features

were remarkably handsome, his manners extremely affable. I perceived that he liked to chat with me, and even encouraged me to speak freely. Two months had elapsed before he left us. Need I say, we were all grieved to lose his society? He told us he had been travelling some time for the benefit of his health, when he was so suddenly struck down at our gate. We did not again see him for fourteen months. Often during that time I thought of the solitary man, so calm and reserved—at least, with regard to himself and his family—for he never mentioned aught with respect to his private history. One afternoon I was sitting in the garden at work—Amy and Henrietta were playing at a short distance from me—when, by a long-drawn breath, I became aware that some one was near to me. I quickly looked up, and, to my surprise, I perceived Mr. Percival leaning against a tree. The children spied him before I did: they were bounding towards him in eager delight. He expressed neither pleasure nor sorrow at beholding them, but quietly embraced the children: so I bade them return to their games, and invited our friend indoors.—‘Thank you,’ he said, in his usual gracious manner; ‘but I have not yet greeted you.’ He grasped my hand as he spoke, and then dropped it nervously. I looked at him in much surprise, and

quietly asked if he felt ill. His answer was not given immediately; but when it came I felt sure he was suffering. 'Let us go in, Mr. Percival,' I said as cheerfully as I could: for I felt uneasy about him.—'Go in? yes, if you wish to do so.'—'Albert will be here presently,' I continued, 'and will be very glad to see you again.'—'But are *you* glad, Arabella—are *you* glad?'—Thinking that he had forgotten my name, I said, 'Yes, very glad. but how is it that you give me another name?'—'Another name? What name?'—He was looking at me so stedfastly and wonderingly that I was perplexed how to reply; for he began to appear excited, and his eyes were wild in expression. At last I said timidly, 'You forget: my name is Anna Garton.'—'Forget! Is there such a blessing as forgetfulness?'—'You have proved to me that there is, Mr. Percival.'—He appeared so much agitated that I deemed it prudent to be quiet: so we walked towards the house and entered the drawing-room. Just then the garden gate was thrown open, and papa advanced at a very quick pace, and opened the door. I met him; and he enquired hurriedly, 'Is any one here besides yourself, my child?'—'Yes, papa—only fancy!—Mr. Percival is in the——'—Almost pushing past me, he hastened on. I was inclined to follow, but

changed my wish, and awaited patiently papa's next movement. He shortly returned to the place where he left me, and remarked gravely and sadly, 'My dear Anna, I fear that poor fellow is deranged!'—'Oh! papa,' I cried tremblingly, 'do not say that!'—'Pray keep calm. I have sent for Dr. Conwin, and I trust that both he and Albert will be here soon. Our poor friend was with Albert some time this morning, and spoke very incoherently. Some trouble has taken fast hold of his mind; and I think Albert understood that Percival has been disappointed. But here come the doctor and your brother.'—I beckoned to Albert, and asked for information respecting Mr. Percival's communication.—'No, no, Anna; you girls are so inquisitive.'—'Tell me, Albert,—if you were not required to keep secret what you were told.'—'Very well, Anna; I did intend to give you as much of the history as I could manage to recollect: so try to be patient; for you know I am no hand at story-telling. Poor Percival has been jilted—there. Wish I could remember the lady's name—but never mind. I don't suppose she will ever know rest and peace when she is informed of the mischief her bad taste has done: for really, Anna, what more could any young lady require in a lover than what Percival possesses? Well, you



need not look so anxious for more, because I really do not see what more you can possibly want to hear. I think he said he had received a very heartless note from her in consequence of his absence. You see, absence does not always make the heart grow fonder. Well, she accepted the hand—and *heart* also, I suppose—of another very eligible young man, whose name is not to be mentioned. My winding-up is, to say that I hope she will be happy! Here is the note: Percival placed it in my hands, and vanished. I fancy he must have come on here at once.' Yes, Jessie, papa's surmise was correct: poor Mr. Percival was proved to be of unsound mind! We were all so much grieved. We did all in our power to make him comfortable during his short sojourn at our house. I saw him several times. The day for his departure arrived, and I was determined to bid him farewell. I put out my hand, which he seized, and then drew from his pocket a parcel; saying—'Will you receive this as a parting token of esteem?'—I took it, and bowed, as he raised his hat, his countenance being expressive of deep sadness and regret. I could not help shedding tears for many days when I thought of that suffering, weary look. In the parcel I found and perused several letters, and gathered from them the greater part of his trouble.

I saw several times the name of Arabella Rollach, and, of course, no longer doubted that she was the cause of his affliction."

After a short pause, Anna proceeded :—

"Do you now wonder that I tremble for my brother's happiness? He never called to mind her name, and, as he cared not to know, I let the subject drop. I firmly believe Albert has not the least idea that he has for his future bride one who, according to all accounts, was, and is, a confirmed flirt. It is, as you know, dear Jessie, two years since the Rollachs arrived in George. Yes; where is Mr. Percival now? Where, alas! He is better now, though deprived of his liberty. He wished to return to his family in England. His only sister has done all that she could for her much-loved brother. She wrote to papa last November."

"Poor dear Anna! I am so very sorry. I hoped ——"

"That my story would not have so melancholy an ending. I have never seen another Mr. Percival. I have often thought he was the cause of my becoming a strong-minded woman. I have become so accustomed to my present life, that I have not the slightest wish for a change. I am certain that every one can be happy by trying to make others so."

"How strange, Anna, that you and Miss Rollach are living in the same town. I dare say you have gazed at her in surprise, and silently asked yourself 'Where is the gentleman for whose sake Miss Rollach marred the future of Mr. Percival?'"

"My candid opinion is, that Miss Rollach has met with a disappointment similar to that which she wilfully caused Mr. Percival."

"But, Anna, I never met with another so gay—as if fate had bestowed upon her an unvented amount of bliss."

"Our opinions, dear Jessie, differ widely regarding Miss Rollach; for I firmly believe that she is not what she seems. Her gaiety and laughter are affected—not genuine."

"Do you really think so, Anna?"

"I do; and I am the more astonished that my brother, who is so very open and sincere, could have been so entirely dazzled by the showy exterior and brilliant manners of Miss Rollach."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## JESSIE PRACTISES FORBEARANCE.

THE next evening (Wednesday) the Graingers usually set apart for the reception of their friends. Mrs. Grainger, who was a model manager in household matters, was rapidly moving from room to room, and, with quick scrutinizing glances and actions, ordering and arranging the adornment of her elegant apartments. Everything seemed perfect; but to the fastidious eyes of the mistress there was needed an extra touch or addition before all was satisfactory.

"Mamma," said Jessie, with a slight frown, "why are you so very particular to-night?"

"Am I more so than usual, Jessie?"

"Yes; but perhaps it is only my fancy. You seem to forget that several of our usual friends will not be present."

"Ah! is that why your hints are dropped, my dear? I do not forget that Mr. Mortimer will not grace our rooms this evening."

"And the Gartons, mamma, and the——."

"Here are the Rollachs, Jessie: go with them, dear, and assist if you can."

Jessie so appealed to, looked grave; but gracefully stepped forward and greeted the first arrivals in a very gentle though not an eager or joyous mood, as the ladies addressed her. Miss Rollach noticed Jessie's demeanour, and her face clouded; her lips instantly assuming the scornful sarcastic form so habitual to them. Miss Freer became nervous as she noticed her cousin's countenance; and in a timid manner she remarked, as the three entered Jessie's room,

"Cousin Bella, how delightfully warm here, is it not?"

Miss Rollach did not deign a reply; but with an exclamation of impatience said,

"Well, I must conclude that I have not brought it!"

"Can I supply the deficiency?" asked Jessie, calmly.

And Jessie soon found that Miss Rollach had omitted to bring several articles of adornment, without which she could not possibly appear in company.

"Really, Bella, you are taxing Jessie's patience and kindness too much," observed Carrie at last, with a look of entreaty that her cousin would

desist from her visits to the mirror with Jessie's borrowed jewels.

"P'shaw! Carrie: do you forget that Miss Grainger wishes to be recognised as 'Lady Perfection?' "

"Indeed, Miss Rollach, Jessie does not know herself by that title."

"Bella! what are you saying? I am certain no one would say that Jessie is selfish!"

"Oh, dear, no; who did, Carrie? I think as we are ready, it will be well to adjourn to the drawing-room," said Jessie, pleasantly.

As the ladies entered the drawing-room, the first to advance was Mr. Danvers, bowing profusely; and then offering his arm to Jessie, he led her to another part of the room, where he found a lounge; and, deeming it best to indulge her very attentive and delighted companion, Jessie placed herself near to a door, and prepared to listen with a feeling of vexation and amusement. Mr. Danvers glanced several times at the quiet face near him, and came at last to the conclusion that her manner betokened content; he therefore smiled, and remarked,

"I am delighted to be again in this apartment, seeing once more the 'belle of George.' "

Jessie bowed, and smiled as she replied,

"I hope it is not your particular *forte* to flatter, Mr. Danvers? Pray excuse me, but do you not know that——Oh, Mina; how are you? Come and sit here. You are rather late."

The two girls were soon chatting in entire oblivion of Mr. Danvers' frowns and evident annoyance at the sudden interruption to the pleasant *tête à tête* he had commenced with Jessie. He remained silent; but at last grew uneasy by hearing Mina exclaim,

"Oh, Jessie, I can never repay you for your goodness!"

Mr. Danvers rose and stood facing the girls. Unable to conceal his dislike to Mina, he addressed Jessie.

"Have you been making many additions to your sketch-book lately, Miss Grainger?"

"Not many, Mr. Danvers."

"I have a few, which I think you may like to see."

"Thanks, Mr. Danvers. Were you pleased with the country through which you passed?"

"I was. The Ruysna is, I believe, considered famous for beautiful scenery. Yes; there are charming spots in that part of the colony—quite romantic—grand and beautiful."

"I hope soon to pay my respects to the pretty

place, and my pencil shall do its best to reproduce some of the charming nooks thereabouts. Dear Mina, I presume you seldom touch your portfolio without a sigh of regret?"

"No, Jessie, I never had time to continue drawing."

"You will not object to my glancing over the contents of *your* portfolio?" said Mr. Danvers, looking at Jessie.

"Not at all: but here is Mr. Dousin, and I perceive he comes with a request."

"You are right: I came to beg you will favour me with this song. I have endeavoured to prevail upon one of the ladies yonder to sing it; but they appear remarkably diffident, and all declined to oblige me. Will you honour me?"

"Oh, Mr. Dousin, what is it?" cried Jessie, laughingly, taking the piece of music: the title of which Mr. Danvers was trying to read as Mr. Dousin gave it up to Jessie.

"Yes; I know this, it is very simple. How can any lady be so cruel as to refuse to sing it to you?"

"Pray, take my arm then."

"Dear Mina, come with me: I think you like to sit near to the piano."

Mr. Danvers also walked forward, and stood



near the group, playing with his watch-guard, and deep in thought, even after Jessie's voice died away in low and dreamy murmurs. Mr. Dousin stifled a sigh of regret, when Jessie turned to Mina with a question,

"Did *you* like the air?"

"Yes, Jessie, very much. I always like to hear you sing."

"Perhaps Miss Grainger can find among her collection a particular favourite of mine, 'The Last Rose of Summer.'"

"Yes, Mr. Danvers, I have it: but I will now resign my place to Miss Freer, who I perceive has been prevailed on to sing for some person's gratification."

"It seems my fate to be thwarted in all my attempts to be near you this evening," sadly whispered Mr. Danvers, as he conducted Jessie to her mother.

"Dear mamma, I have been informed that you require my presence. I have been striving to get near you for some minutes."

"Yes, Jessie. How is it that you have not been near Miss Rollach this evening? Do go, dear, she will not like being overlooked."

Jessie glanced in the direction where she would find Miss Rollach and, smiling to herself, thought

it would be a difficult task for any person to overlook one who always made herself so conspicuous as did that young lady. She soon after noticed that Miss Rollach was intently surveying her. She accordingly tripped lightly across the room, and merrily inquired if she were at liberty.

"I at liberty? really you surprise me: it is *you* who are always so monopolized, that there is no getting near you for a second. I was wondering a short time since, how you could manage to look so gay without your true chevalier!"

"What a speech!" said Jessie, laughingly.

"I do not feel in good spirits at all to-night. When do you expect Mr. Mortimer's return?"

"I am not certain: he left only last Monday morning."

"Did you not feel the parting very acutely? for one does not know what may occur, even in three days."

"Oh, Arabella, what do you mean?"

"Nothing that need trouble you. I wish you would be so good as to call me 'Bella,' and not 'Arabella.' I hate that name."

"I beg your pardon: but why did you give utterance to that startling remark?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I spoke for my own exclusive use and benefit. Surely, you are not the

only girl who deploras the necessary absence of one to whom one is engaged ; consequently, you should feel for others who are in the same position."

Jessie's brow lowered at Miss Rollach's words. She hailed the appearance of Mr. Dousin, who said,

"I was detained yonder by your sketches. I am a great admirer of such things ; though I fear I should not be considered a correct judge."

"I thought you expected the Gartons. I felt certain that some of them would be here," Bella exclaimed.

"I hoped to have had the pleasure of Anna's company ; but she was kept at home by the illness of her father."

As Miss Rollach's tall figure crossed the room, leaning on Mr. Dousin's arm, Mr. Danvers and two others who were sauntering about, approached Jessie, and were engaged in pleasant conversation for a short time, until the two latter were induced to try a chorus in Miss Rollach's song.

"I think," observed Mr. Danvers with animation, "as a traveller, and even a wanderer at times, I appreciate an evening like this, passed in social chat and with sweet music."

"I am glad you feel tolerably happy."

"I assure you, Miss Grainger, not tolerably, but

completely so. Since I left England, I have not felt more at home anywhere, than here in your father's hospitable mansion."

Jessie bent her head very gravely: she knew not what was the reason, but she felt a shrinking from this gentleman. A light laugh from Jessie, as she determined to be herself, even with Mr. Danvers, was instantly joined in by him, who said,

"Quite too infectious, Miss Jessie, particularly as I am convinced that we were both amused by the same ludicrous incident!"

"No, no, no! impossible!" said Jessie, and her merry laugh rang through the apartment.

Mr. Grainger stopped in his chat with Mr. Dousin, and watched his daughter, while his eyes twinkled, and his mouth twitched. He soon after walked up to Jessie, and in undisguised search for amusement asked, if he might have a little insight into the fun. Jessie, whose risible faculties were still unstrung, looked up and replied, her face beaming with mischief at the absurdity of the whole thing.

"*We* thought *we* knew each other's thoughts, papa, and our laughing was increased at the strangeness of the——"

"And who is in error?" asked Mr. Grainger, as Jessie hesitated.

"It is no error, my dear sir, that causes our amusement."

"Oh! papa, I wish you could find mamma, and take me to her," said Jessie, eagerly.

"There she is, darling. Come, I see you are anxious to speak to her; therefore, I am sure Mr. Danvers will excuse my leading you away."

"Papa, dear," said Jessie, "I never imagined that my thoughts could be guessed. I was regretting that I could not feel more kindly towards Mr. Danvers, for he had been expressing himself so enthusiastically about us, our house, and hospitality, etc. Now, papa, is it likely he was cogitating in the same strain?"

Jessie's laughter again proved infectious, for Mr. Grainger's intended sternness gave place to unconcealed mirth, as he looked down at his pretty daughter, and met her upturned merry features.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## JESSIE AT THE GARTONS'.

“**I** HAVE been long watching for you, Miss Grainger! Anna was sent for to poor Mrs. Jerry, who is dying; and she told me to try and make you happy while she is away. I shall have you quite to myself until she returns. Come and sit in this easy chair; *I* think it is very comfortable, do not you?”

“Yes, dear Amy, and where are *you* going to place yourself?”

“Here, on this stool: I like to look up to you.”

“Miss Grainger, do you like Keble’s ‘Christian Year’?”

“I do not know the book, Amy: prose or poetry?”

“All poetry: this is one piece I have been reading this afternoon, for the fourth Sunday after Easter. Would you like to read it, Miss Grainger?”

“I should like to hear *you* do so.” Amy instantly complied.

Miss Grainger said, "Amy, do you not think that Mr. Keble must have been feeling very happy when he was composing such poetry?"

"I scarcely know; but I have never read any poetry so beautiful as this: I shall ask you to lend me this little volume when you can spare it."

"With pleasure. Anna can tell you how much she admires the work."

"What is that, dear Amy?" asked Anna, advancing to Jessie, whom she greeted most affectionately.

"The 'Christian Year.'"

"I think, Jessie, you will find in it some beautiful lines. Did Amy tell you my favourite, for the twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity: 'The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.'"

"Miss Grainger likes those lines" said Amy, "who had been surveying her friend's changing countenance and efforts to preserve equanimity, while the verses were read. Jessie's thanks were low, but fervently spoken to Anna, who turned her deep expressive eyes upon Jessie. The conversation then turned to Mrs. Jerry, from whose cottage Anna had just returned.

"Is she no better? did she enjoy the custard?"

"Yes, Amy, as much as she can now like anything, for she will never be well again."

Mrs. Terry was a widow, and childless, and had long been a helpless sufferer. She was formerly a valued servant of the Gartons', and they had always taken an interest in her from the day she left their service. Afflictions and losses had come upon her, and she was now lingering out her last days comfortably, through the generosity of her late master and his family. It was Anna's desire to promote in her sisters tenderness and care for poor and sick persons, and they entered heartily into Anna's plans for the comfort and relief of the aged and needy.

"Are you fond of visiting poor sick ones?" asked Amy.

"No, I have never been able to go, Amy; I do not know how I should manage were I asked to do so," replied Jessie.

"Dear Anna, what a strange selfish creature you must think me," said Jessie, turning her eyes to her friend.

"Not at all, Jessie: it needs strong courage to be a visitor among those who we know are very often wicked as well as dirty, and such persons are not easily dealt with. I can well imagine that you do not like to go near them."



"But, Anna, you forget that Jesus went among the poor and wicked."

"I am too thankful to be assured of that; it has been my highest gratification to know that He was a loving helper of the outcast."

"But, dear Amy, I am going to lead Jessie away for a time; we will leave you for half-an-hour, which you may devote either to reading or music. Come, Jessie."

There was silence in the pretty room to which Anna had invited Jessie Grainger. Anna's face wore a look of quiet submission, but Jessie's was thoughtful and almost sad. The ladies were seated near an open window, the fragrant odour of the flowers was wafted to them from a garden beneath. Anna was gazing at some trees in the distance, and at last roused herself, and taking Jessie's hand, she said,

"I wanted to tell you how much better I have felt since the chat we last had. I never intended to burthen you with my troubles. I know you will say I have not done so; but I suppose it is only natural to seek relief and advice from those whom we regard and esteem. Albert arrived this morning. I have not yet had an opportunity of alluding to the note he sent me. I am so much surprised by my brother's choice. Papa, will I

know, be extremely disappointed, for he looks upon Albert as the future prop and stay of our house. How did all go on at your home last evening? Very well?"

"Miss Rollach was with us."

"Indeed, I was sorry, dear Jessie, to be again among the absentees."

"So was I. Miss Rollach inquired about your non-appearance. Her manners and remarks left on my mind no doubt of your brother's statement being correct. I think if she truly loves Mr. Garton, she may become in time, under his kind influence, more ——"

"Do not hesitate, dear Jessie, for I am sure you will not say anything uncharitable; I think she might grow more loveable and homely, and then we must try to believe that all is working for good. Now let us turn to another subject: but I hear Amy's voice."

"Anna," said Amy, breathless through excitement and haste, "Mrs. Hopley and Mrs. Lawson are in the drawing-room."

"How very glad I am! Let us all go to them."

"You here," exclaimed both ladies, as Jessie advanced with outstretched hand and smiling face.

"I am very pleased to see you, darling," said loving Mrs. Hopley, embracing Jessie.

"I am come home at last, dear, you perceive," remarked Mrs. Lawson as she kissed Jessie. "Your mamma informed me that you were out, but I did not ask where I might find you."

"I shall not want you *now*, Mrs. Lawson," saucily remarked Jessie, with one arm round the neck of her governess.

"What will you do with me, dear?"

"Hand you over to Anna; she will give you an easier task with her sisters than you have had with me."

"Have you had Anna's opinion on the subject?"

"No, only a hint, that when I can spare you, she hopes you will find this side of the road agreeable to you."

"My dear child!" Mrs. Lawson could not resist laughing at Jessie's comical manner. There was a general smile afterwards, as she asked abruptly, "Did not mamma tell you what she intended offering for your kind consideration?"

"No, my dear, I have not been in town more than two hours, and could not expect your mother to tell me everything: she has always been so kind! I am not impatient. When are we to lose you, dear?"

"Very soon, so make the most of me, by caressing and indulging me to the utmost."

"I think, Jessie, we all do that. When do you expect Mr. Mortimer will return?"

"In two days hence, if all should have been going on to his satisfaction. I must compliment you upon looking so well and fresh: did not mamma say the same?"

"Yes, dear; and she told me that I must show myself to my friends as a thoroughly good specimen of old age."

"And good looks, she ought to have said. Dear Mrs. Lawson, I sometimes grieve over myself."

"Why, dear?" asked Mrs. Lawson in surprise.

"I cannot help thinking that I am sometimes too light-hearted and careless; when I check myself, I become the opposite. Do tell me what you think about such a state of mind?"

"It is best, dear, to keep under and curb both extremes. Our Heavenly Father would not have us habitually melancholy in the midst of so much that is bright and beautiful."

"Last evening I could not control the feeling of excessive mirth, caused by something that was said to me; and when I went to my room I felt quite ashamed of my behaviour."

"My dear Jessie, you must remember that the work of perfection is never completed here; we do

but strive. How long have you been earnestly doing so?"

"How difficult it is to keep sufficient guard over our wayward inclinations, is it not?"

"Unquestionably so, dear Jessie: a Christian's path must of necessity be surrounded with danger."

"Dear Mrs. Lawson, I sometimes try to look forward to reaching your time of life. I wonder if I should feel glad at the approach of age and that consequent ——"

"Well, Jessie, death is not terrible to those who have perseveringly resisted evil, who long to resign feeble limbs and decaying strength for the glorious rest of Heaven. Mrs. Hopley is preparing to start, and I promised to walk with her; you, I see, are purposing to remain and take tea with Anna: I shall therefore merely say, '*Au revoir*.'"

Anna and Amy had been detailing to Mrs. Hopley many projects for a pic-nic at Geneva's fountain, which received that lady's approbation. All walked to the gate, and, the evening being balmy, the younger ladies remained out of doors until they heard the bell for tea.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## MR. MORTIMER'S RETURN.

THE morning of the day Mr. Mortimer was expected to return, was warm and sunny; though snow was visible on the mountains, and dew-drops were glittering on the flowers. Jessie was ready earlier than usual for a stroll, as Mina was coming to walk with her. A brisk walk they intended it to be, for Mina's varied duties rarely allowed her the privilege of long absence: and Jessie was aware of this. Mrs. Grainger was busy—superintending a quantity of needle-work—she therefore could not accompany her daughter. Jessie attired herself in a blue merino dress, mantle of the same, and her usual Leghorn hat with white trimming—"a very becoming and pretty costume for young maidens," her father observed admiringly.

Jessie went to her mother, but Mrs. Grainger's eyes, ears, and sense generally, were not aware of the fair presence until addressed by Jessie with a little mischievous smile :

"Mamma, I trust I am of more interest to you than that heap of stuff."

"Certainly, *miss*; but it is for your own use. What! dressed already; very early, is it not?"

"Yes; but I confess my venturous nature is this morning much inclined for active movements, and I could delight in roving over steep mountains and down deep valleys, peering into inaccessible, imaginary caves, and——"

"You foolish girl! I am aware what that prelude signifies: somebody is coming, and a certain person hopes to meet him."

"Mamma," laughingly replied Jessie, "you should not be so keen and searching in your speeches—you shock me!"

"Well, run away: kiss me first, child."

In the passage Jessie met Miss Beyers, and pleasantly exclaimed,

"Mina, you little gipsy! good morning to you; the sunshine is very welcome: was not the cold yesterday very trying?"

"Yes, Jessie, out of doors: but I was warm though, for I was ironing all day."

"Poor dear Mina! I will send our Launa to assist you one day in every week."

"You are too kind, Jessie: I shall be very thankful, but Mrs. Grainger might object."

"Mamma will never prevent me from spending my money as I like: which day shall she go to you?"

"Thursday, if you please."

"Mina, I wish a rich man would find you out, with your many excellent qualities, and marry you out of love and admiration!"

This wish of Jessie's produced a slight frown on Mina's brow, but it soon vanished: and she smiled: then meeting Jessie's eyes, the girls laughed heartily.

"Which way are you going now, Jessie?"

"Down over the bridge, and then *on* and *on*. I should like to see the post-cart, and especially the passengers, for they will probably look tired, and will stare at us as though we had come from fairyland."

The girls walked on for some time without speaking, then Mina asked if Mr. Mortimer were likely to be in the cart.

"No, you naughty Mina: I told you that he went in a hired cart with a driver."

"I forgot. I cannot keep up with you, Jessie, you walk so fast."

"Do I? I should now like to run down that soft, grassy hill; come with me, Mina."

"Oh! Jessie, are we not going too far?"



For reply, she clasped Mina's hand, and both ran lightly down: their faces glowing with the fresh keen air.

Jessie said when they had rested a short time, "Mina, I *must* go now."

"*Now?* well, best of daughters and sisters, I will not detain you a minute longer."

She bounded away and ran up another smaller hill, and strained both her eyes and her limbs for one good look around her; then, down she tripped, caught Mina's hand and said,

"Come, I see it is of no use waiting here."

"Perhaps, dear Jessie, Mr. Mortimer may have reached home."

"Oh! no, he must pass this way first: and it is not late—here he is! Bertie!"

"Why, Jessie, is it possible that you are here, and alone!"

"Yes: we are tired; Mina and I will get into the cart."

"*You*, tired: how long have you been here?" asked Herbert, in a gratified voice; and he bade the driver proceed.

"I did not count the hours," answered Jessie merrily, "but I think Mina will vouch for the truth of my statement, that the time exceeds half an hour!"

"I am so very much pleased to see you: I little anticipated so early a greeting."

The return of Jessie and Mina was accomplished sooner than they expected; all entered Mr. Grainger's garden, where Mina took leave.

In the afternoon Jessie and her mother were seated in the drawing-room: Mr. Grainger being engaged with "Bleak House," Jessie at wool-work:

"Mamma, do you admire Dickens' works?" at last questioned Jessie.

"Certainly I do, but my favourite author is Marryatt."

"I acknowledge, mamma, that I prefer something quieter and more reasonably natural."

"My dear child, there is enough reality and sameness in every-day life, without looking for sober matter-of-fact in novels. I like to be carried away from present scenes and doings to uncommon events and subjects."

"I apprehend, mamma, that you revel in the romantic!"

"At times,—but here comes Herbert."

"Good afternoon, ladies," he said, rather gravely.

Jessie immediately noticed the strangeness of his demeanour, and gently asked what troubled him?

He replied sadly, as they all sat down, "I have just left my stables, and very much grieved I am to find that the lung sickness is making havoc there: both Fairy and Pride are battling with the disease, and I tremble for Wrath!"

"I am very sorry to hear this," said Jessie.

"But have you had the usual remedies applied?" asked Mrs. Grainger.

"Yes, though without avail. Jessie, Mrs. Hopley complains of your being so long away from her; you are naughty to neglect her, and I away."

"She was out when last I called upon her. Is she well?"

"Yes; she bade me take you this evening, if possible: will you accompany us, Mrs. Grainger?"

"With pleasure; but I must first send word to Mr. Grainger, where he may find us."

"Jessie," said Herbert, "I intended 'Fairy,' for you."

"Fairy for me! why, Bertie, you never dropped a hint to me about such a gift."

"No, I never intended *Miss Grainger* should know aught of Fairy's future possessor. I hoped Mrs. Herbert Mortimer would have claimed her."

"Is Fairy the black mare you lately told papa that you had purchased?"

"Yes, she is slender, and has a beautiful soft black glossy coat. I have been very proud of her: and now, to lose her so suddenly, makes me quite impatient."

"Dear Herbert, do not be troubled."

"I am, though: I paid sixty pounds for her only last month. And as for 'Pride,' the noble creature! dear uncle Hopley's gift when I came of age. I remember that morning perfectly: I was coming down to breakfast, when Piet came up to me, cap in hand, and showing all his teeth as he said that his master wished me to wait upon him in the yard. I went, and you can imagine how pleased I was to see 'Pride' ready saddled. I went up to uncle, and all he said was, 'Herbert, my boy, I wish you many happy returns of this day. I want you to try this animal, and then tell me what you think of Pride as your property.' I pressed his hands, and rode away as though 'Pride' had always belonged to me."

"How very kind of Mr. Hopley!"

"Kind, Jessie? he always was too much so. What would I give to save the life of my favourite horse! You have often seen him?"

"Yes, Bertie, and have turned from you to him in admiration of both the horse and his rider."

"Flatterer! But I like to hear you say any thing complimentary. Has your mother gone, Jessie?"

"Here am I," said Mrs. Grainger, entering.

Soon after they had reached Mrs. Hopley's abode, Herbert went hastily to the stable, when, to his deep regret, he beheld "Pride," and "Fairy," struggling in their last agony. "Wrath," who had been removed to a distant shed, was gaining a mastery over the disease. Mr. Mortimer stood gazing: and not until a vehicle had been procured for the removal of the loved, though dead animals, did he turn away from the sad spectacle. With a heavy sigh he saw them placed in the low waggon: and then, with head bent, and hands in his pockets—the attitude of one thoroughly dejected—he re-entered the house. He walked to the door of the apartment where the ladies were seated, and called to Jessie, who rose and went to him. Mr. Mortimer placed chairs near the fire, and then detailed to Jessie the fate of the two horses. Jessie listened silently and sympathetically to Mr. Mortimer's account, and then drawing her chair nearer, she placed her hands in his. Jessie's silence was eloquent, and more becoming than unavailing regrets—so thought Herbert after a short time—

he raised his eyes, and watched her face, which was so expressive of quiet resignation.

"You darling Jessie!" said Herbert, brightening. "How delightful to have you here! Are not my hands very cold?"

"Yes, they are: come nearer to the fire, Bertie."

Jessie took a low stool, and seating herself near to Mr. Mortimer, she smilingly took possession of his hands and caressed them until they looked a more natural colour: but there were no words spoken by either of them for some minutes. At last, Jessie glanced up, and fancying his eyes were dull and dreamy, she concluded that he was still meditating on his loss. She was going to relinquish his hands, but feeling her own clasped tighter, she again looked up, and smiled as she said,

"Your hands are warm now?"

"Yes, they are; do not rise, Jessie; let us remain here quietly until aunt Hopley announces supper."

"Well, to be sure!" exclaimed that lady, entering; "you have been enjoying the full benefit of the fire, I see. Well, Herbert?"

"Both dead! dear aunt."

"I am truly grieved to hear this: has Jessie

been playing her part as comforter? Try and comfort yourself, my dear boy, with the fact that you are not the only loser through this terrible disease."

"That is true, aunt Hopley—too true—but I cannot at present afford to lose *mine*."

"Certainly not, but you may live to replace them."

"I trust so: but where shall I find another 'Fairy' for you, Jessie?"

"Do not talk of that now."

"Very well; but one thing is certain, I shall not be content until I possess another animal as beautiful as Fairy. In the meantime I shall say, '*Nil desperandum!*'"

"Do, Herbert; and never waste time in idle regrets."

Mrs. Hopley passed on, but not before she had imprinted a kiss on her nephew's forehead, and one on Jessie's damask cheek.

Mr. Grainger arrived late: the cause being an invitation most politely and urgently presented by Mr. Danvers to partake of supper with him at Dane's Hotel. The remainder of the evening was spent quietly and happily by all.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## A PICNIC AT GENEVA FOUNTAIN.

JESSIE was ready, walking up and down the path leading to the garden gate. The morning was calm though cloudy, and favourable for a long march into the country. Jessie was rewarded for her patient waiting, by perceiving Miss Garton's tall figure coming down at a quick pace towards the gate, which Jessie instantly opened, greeting her friend very warmly.

"I fear, dear Jessie, that I have kept you waiting. You will sympathise with me, when I tell you that I have been entertaining Miss Rollach."

"Is it true, Anna—so early also?"

"Yes, indeed, Jessie. Shall we walk on? I did not find the task so very difficult, until she sat in Mr. Percival's favourite nook near the piano, and observed that it was the most agreeable place in the room."

"Poor Anna! what sensitive nerves!"

"Pray do not talk of nerves, Jessie; I try to



forget that I have any. Are you disposed to hear how papa received the unwelcome tidings? He, of course, became excited, and declaimed against my brother's folly, and soon after left the room. The same evening Albert went to papa, after hearing from me how my remarks had been received. He was determined to go well through the affair, and, accordingly, went and told papa of his deep affection for, and engagement to, Miss Rollach. To his extreme surprise, papa merely wished him every happiness with the object of his choice. Now Albert, not being prepared for so laconic a speech, asked papa if he had any objection to Miss Rollach, or if he had fancied any other young lady for a daughter-in-law. Papa paused ere he replied: 'Albert, you must be aware that I have no liking for any of the family; and after telling me what you have just now said, I could not expect that you would break off an engagement which we, as Englishmen, view in a holy light—for a private reason of mine, too. All that I have to say is, that I hope you have not run into dangers and difficulties from which you expect others will help you out.—' I hope, father, you will not deny this house to Bella, nor prevent her from being in my sisters' company.'—'This house is your father's, and you are at liberty to bring your friends to it.

For your sake, Albert, I will try to receive Miss Rollach as a daughter. Now we will drop the subject.'—My brother has taken advantage of papa's relenting so far, and one of the Rollach family is with us every day. But I have not told you the cause of Miss Bella's visit this morning. Hearing that we hoped to go to Geneva Fountain, she came to propose that they should accompany us, saying that her step-mother would send on a basket of necessaries for dinner. I at first declined, because we intend to return early in the afternoon to welcome home our youngest brother Morton, who is, we trust, on his way here from Mossel Bay. His health is still, as we are informed, very indifferent; and he besought papa to allow his abstaining from school duties for a term."

"More anxiety for you, Anna!"

"Yes, but I shall be more satisfied to have him at home. I can watch over him, and perhaps send him back to school."

"Do you know, Anna, that I have not seen Sidney for some time?"

"Have you not? Well, I will send him to you with my next message. He is my pet brother."

"Then I must take it for granted that he is much spoiled."

"No, no, Jessie, I try not to spoil any one."

"But, Anna, pets are very much cared for, indulged, and humoured—are they not?"

Anna smiled and looked thoughtful. Soon afterwards she called out—

"Now, children, keep together; there will be too much to do if I have to run after each one who may fancy herself 'lost.'"

"Oh! Anna, I'll take care of all, except"—whispered Amy—"Susan Rollach: she will not keep near us any longer."

"Susie," called Anna gently.

The child instantly turned and ran back. She was a bright, rosy-cheeked girl of eight years, and, standing by Anna, patiently waited for a reprimand.

"Miss Garton, Bella don't care where I run when I go out with her—but I'll stop close to the others, if you wish it."

As the party reached the farm and entered the gate, the smiling occupants—mother and daughter—were visible at the cottage door, with words of welcome to their visitors.

"Good morning, Mrs. Roward. How are you, Fanny?" said Anna cheerfully to the rosy-faced, happy-looking Miss Roward, who was endeavouring to procure seats for all.

"Father is in the garden, miss."

"We want *lots* of fruit," said Susan Rollach, who was not famed for politeness of address.

"Do you, little miss?" remarked Mrs. Roward good-naturedly. "There is not so much fruit now as there was last month."

"Well, won't the man find *some* fruit for us?" again asked the child in a shrill, eager tone.

"Hush! Susie," Miss Garton said gently; "if there is any fruit to be had on the farm, I am sure we shall have it. I think we will all go at once, Mrs. Roward."

"Very well, Miss Garton; my daughter shall go with you and show the road."

Fanny immediately took her hat and walked on, while the party slowly followed her down a cool, shady path. The children, who were scampering on, were the first to see kind old Mr. Roward, Susie's voice being loudest in her request for *lots* of fruit.

"Oh! Anna," said Jessie, who appeared much amused: "what a persevering persecutor that little creature is!"

Anna was not able to refrain from laughing as she looked at her friend's countenance; but she soon became grave as she watched Susan's boisterous mirth and wild behaviour.

"Good morning, ladies," rose Mr. Roward's

cheerful salutation above the noisy voices of the children.

"Good morning, Mr. Roward," replied Anna and Jessie simultaneously.

"You are wishing to spend part of the day in my grounds, I see. Very good, ladies, very good. There's plenty of cool spots, and Fan will take you to the prettiest."

"Thank you, Mr. Roward," said Anna pleasantly.

"And if there is anything else you may want, my old woman up yonder will give it you with pleasure."

"Thank you ; but we will not trespass very much upon your kindness. See—here comes a servant with our provision. And we are anxious, if you please, to have some fruit—as the children have been telling you."

"Yes, miss, you shall have some directly. Come along with me, children. Fan, do you take the ladies off to a snug place."

She led the way to an extremely charming retreat, surrounded by splendid trees. The ladies looked delighted ; and Anna warmly thanked their kind conductress in these words :—

"It is indeed a luxurious retreat ! Fanny, we are indebted to you for your good-natured com-

pliance with our wishes. We shall not fail to remember our guide."

"I am very glad, miss, to see that you are so well pleased. If there is anything you want from the house, you can send the boy, and mother will be sure to forward it to you."

"Thank you, Fanny, for this promise. Good bye for the present," said Anna, as the young girl quietly vanished.

"Now, Jessie, here we are in our sylvan recess. The next thing is, to get ready our grassy table for lunch."

Several hours passed by; the children—five—who had been invited had enjoyed a feast of fruit; all had partaken of a hearty meal; and now, weary of wandering about, they were all resting—comfortable, contented and happy. Jessie suddenly rose, and told Anna that she heard voices.

"Do you? Well, Jan is yonder—I will send him to see."

He soon returned, saying,

"There is Mr. Albert and a lady, and Master Sidney with another *little* gentleman."

"That must be Morton!" exclaimed Anna joyfully, as she rushed forward.

Soon steps were heard approaching, and Amy clasped her arms round her young brother—a

slight, delicate youth, with a very pretty, shy face. Albert and Miss Rollach looked delighted with the prospect of spending the afternoon together. Sidney Garton saw everybody and everything apparently, except his brother's betrothed; and Jessie could not help thinking that his aversion to the lady was akin to that of his absent father. He stationed himself near Anna, and merrily chatted of his day's exploits. Morton was unwilling to leave Amy and Hetty, who could scarcely keep their eyes off their young brother.

"I do not understand, Morton," observed Anna, "how you contrived to obtain papa's consent to leave home so soon after your long journey."

"I managed it, Anna," Albert exclaimed. "We would not leave the little fellow by himself."

"But, Albert, we did not provide enough of the creature comforts."

"Not necessary to trouble yourself about that, my good sister; for behold a basket, for size and delicious contents unequalled in the present and future annals of our family. Sit down here, Put, my man," said Albert, addressing a coloured servant, who lifted from his shoulders a huge basket, and placed it as Albert directed, close to Anna's feet.

"Now, Anna, here is a friend's contribution; so help to discharge the contents for general consumption, and we will not fail to express due praise and gratitude."

"You really impose a task upon me, which I almost doubt my ability to perform, so as to give general satisfaction; but with your aid, I will try to do my best."

"Mamma, put all these things together for your acceptance," said Miss Rollach.

"Mrs. Rollach certainly hoped that we had appetites," said Anna, pleasantly, "though I think we have already had an excellent lunch, eh, Jessie?"

"Never mind that," remarked Miss Rollach, who did not give Jessie time to speak; "people can always eat a little more than they usually do, when out of doors. Do you not think so? Can I assist you, Miss Garton?"

"No, no, Bella; pray rest."

"I," said Albert, "am at everybody's service—a willing slave, attendant, waiter—just what you young ladies like to call me. With what shall I tempt you?"

"O! thank you, Albert; that will do: I do not care much for cake just yet."



"Well, what then; something more substantial, eh, Bella?"

"Thanks, Mr. Garton."

"Mr. Garton, indeed!" grumbled good-natured Albert, walking away in pretended anger.

"Jessie, I do wish that you would say exactly what you think of me—not now, some other time."

"Indeed, Bella; you quite perplex me, by making such a request."

"Why, Jessie?"

"I confess that I have a strong desire to be like you, and to initiate myself into your favour, believe me. Look at Anna Garton; what fond affection she evinces towards her brothers and sisters: to me, she is simply polite. Do you think I am ignorant that she *tries* to be friendly with me? Let us join the others; but first I would ask if you have any real desire to assist me? I mean what I say. I have been wild, reckless, vain, and foolish. I have made others miserable, and have been justly punished. Some day, Jessie, when I can feel sure you are willing to receive my confidence, I will tell you more. Why do you not speak. I want you for a friend, indeed I do."

Jessie Grainger no longer withheld her reply, for she saw plainly that Bella was in earnest.

She therefore commenced, "Bella, I never have been your enemy: I certainly do not mean to be so; and for the future you may depend upon me as a friend."


"*Thank you,*" emphatically answered Bella, as she pressed Jessie's hand, and held it until Albert approached, and cried,

"Bella, Miss Grainger: you appear most mysterious in your communications—and I *feel* like no one in particular; but wait most humbly for the pleasure of being a welcome addition. Am I to consider myself such, Bella Donna?"

The rest of the afternoon was spent very agreeably; for Herbert Mortimer joined the party, and gave intense gratification to several—Jessie in particular. When the carts arrived at dusk, there was not one face which looked sad or dull: all were cheerful; and a pleasant drive into town completed a day of thorough enjoyment.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## SUNDAY IN THE FOREST.

NE Sabbath morning, Jessie Grainger was opening the gate on her way to the Sunday-school, which was held in the grammar day-school, near St. Mark's. She was surprised to see Mr. Albert Garton and Miss Rollach passing on the opposite side, evidently intent upon taking a stroll before the service began. Jessie bowed; they drew near to her and shook hands, warmly.

"You a Sunday-school teacher, Miss Grainger?"

"Yes, Mr. Garton, I am."

"Very dreary, dull work teaching such persons to put forth their brightest ideas—is it not?"

"Yes—and—no. The only way to succeed, is to let patience predominate."

"I fancy that in this you and others waste much energy and perseverance."

"Oh, no, Mr. Garton; I am very sorry that you view our labours in so very desponding a light."

"But, Miss Jessie, have you been able to convince any of the young reprobates, that to be good is highly commendable?"

"I trust I have, Mr. Garton," answered Jessie, earnestly.

"I am pleased to hear of your success; and now, as you are going in to your pupils, allow me to wish you a very good morning."

"Good-bye, Jessie," said Miss Rollach, cordially. "I wish you were inclined to walk with us."

"Thanks; but I would not on any account disappoint my little scholars."

Jessie went on her way very thoughtfully. As customary in the afternoon, Mr. Mortimer called for Jessie, and they walked to the forest. He asked abruptly,

"What book has my dear companion brought with her?"

"A very good one, sir," answered Jessie, smiling. "Parts of which I shall be happy to hear you read for our mutual benefit."

"Indeed, Miss; I shall have great pleasure in so doing. I suppose the best and only way to be loved, and to make others love us, is to be perfectly and entirely unselfish."

"I do not want you to read, Bertie, if you had rather not do so."

"You do not understand me rightly, dear Jessie. You surely know that I will read, or do any thing for your pleasure."

"And not for your own?"

"Well, I did not say that either. Supposing I prefer to hear you laugh and chat?"

Jessie remained silent, and both walked on for some time without further conversation.

"Jessie," said Herbert, musingly, "you look grave—have I vexed you?"

"No, Bertie."

"Then why do you not laugh and chat?"

"Because we do plenty of that every day, Bertie."

"Which implies, I suppose, that to-day's talk should be grave."

Jessie looked at Herbert, but he avoided meeting her eyes, and presently observed,

"Danvers has sent a most singular epistle to me: I will shew it to you to-morrow, Jessie."

"What is it about, Herbert?"

"About you, my fair lady."

"*Me*, Herbert."

"Yes," Mr. Mortimer replied, laughingly. "Do not look so desperately puzzled!"

"But, Bertie, I have been trying to be more

patient with him. I had no intention of offending : you know I am trying to be a Christian."

"Now, I think that if we walk round here we shall soon find our favourite nook."

They went on until they reached the spot, through bushes, over thick high grass, and dry crisp branches of trees hanging on the ground, admiring the wild flowers, picking gooseberries, talking of some pet tree which the woodman's axe had felled, and over which it was necessary to climb in order to gain the desired situation. Reached at last!

"I fancy we have been a longer time coming than we intended to be."

Mr. Mortimer folded his arms and assumed a dignified air, while he glanced in divers directions, and in a loud voice exclaimed,

"This is indisputably a most romantic as well as secluded and picturesque scene. This cool, tranquil retreat, so peaceful, where the sounds of the noisy world cannot be heard or seen; this babbling, murmuring brook; the always charming, bright-coloured flowers in wild abundance, so pleasing and gratifying to the senses!"

"Oh, Herbert, why did you stop?" asked Jessie, who had been an eager listener.

"I thought you were perhaps smiling at my

eulogistic description, though I myself cannot do justice to it. I suddenly recollected that a young lady brought a book with her for me to peruse for 'our mutual benefit.' Give it me, Jessie?"

Herbert waited, and Jessie placed the small volume in his hand without speaking or looking at him.

"But I mean to select a suitable rustic seat for the dwellers, rather wanderers, in the wood. This will do admirably: so, lady fair, your humble, though adoring knight will recline near your feet. Am I to select, or will you command me?"

"Dear Bertie, I shall be very glad if you will read the hymn for the second Sunday after Trinity."

Mr. Mortimer found, and immediately perused it.

"Very touching and beautiful, dear Jessie!"

"I see you think so. I never before saw this little book of Keble's. It was lent to me by Amy Garton; she and Anna enjoy it greatly!"

"*You* shall have a copy, Jessie. Such purity and sublimity make one think and feel."

"Think and feel what, Bertie?"

"Well, that Christian love as here represented is indeed to be desired."

"Dear Herbert, never let it be otherwise."

"Religion was never presented to me in any

form that I could accept more willingly than by your sweet voice and face pleading for its value and beauty."

"Oh! I think you ought not to say so. I consider that religion should be *felt* to be loved and appreciated, by seeing for oneself the beauty of holiness."

"You must be right!" said Mr. Mortimer, "yet if I should become a better man, and a more loving and unselfish Christian, I shall own that you were the exemplar from which I copied."

"Dear Herbert, as though I do not err!"

"I do not think you exactly perfect, nor that you cannot err; but I am positive that if patience and gentleness are signs of true religion, you are a fair pattern. Now, my dear little companion, if you are sufficiently rested, we shall do well to trudge homewards:

"The spring of the regenerate heart,  
The pulse, the glow of every part,  
Is the true love of Christ our Lord  
As man embrac'd, as God adored."

"You seem more struck with these lines than with any others!"

"I am, Herbert, for my heart is regenerate, though very ill able to express its joy. And



those lines which follow: how true, and how expressive!

“ ‘E’en so who love the Lord aright,  
No soul of man can worthless find;  
All will be precious in his sight  
Since Christ on all hath shined.’ ”

“ Jessie, this Sabbath afternoon shall bear witness to my newly-formed determination, that I am willing to be an earnest and zealous member of our holy religion. Listen to my confession. About twelve months ago you first spoke seriously to me about being good. You saw how I shunned the subject. By studiously watching you, I have been compelled to think and candidly confess that to be an earnest, stedfast Christian must be most desirable. You shall be my guide, and we will both seek for wisdom to walk in the ways of holiness. Pray, do not weep! ”

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## MARRIED.

**H**ERBERT and Jessie were married three months after what occurred in the last chapter. It is not necessary to give a lengthy description of the wedding, yet a few words concerning that important and interesting event in the life of the two principal persons in this tale shall be noted. That Jessie looked lovely, modest, and elegant; that her countenance portrayed the timidity so usual in a bride, was very evident. That her bridal array was rich, and suited well the graceful figure, was also apparent. The bridesmaids, six in number, included Amy Garton and Mina Beyers. Our manly hero and mercantile friend, Mr. Mortimer, acted to perfection his part in the ceremony. His face wore a remarkably contented and joyous expression; though, during the service, his attention, gravity, and unmistakably earnest and clear replies, denoted a more religious frame of spirit than had been hitherto displayed by him. Who need ask if the two

were happy? The only person who wept was Mrs. Lawson; the others were all cheerful and smiling, several remarking that they were the handsomest couple in town. Then came the breakfast, which was sumptuous, everything being complete and tastefully arranged. It was scarcely over, when a handsome travelling cart with four greys was seen galloping up to the Graingers' residence, and shortly after, the final preparations were completed, and the guests looked as if they expected a scene! Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer's future abode was very near to Mr. Grainger's, he was therefore certain to see his lovely daughter every day. Yet a parent must feel the difference—the loved one is no longer only his, another has a stronger claim. The parting between Mr. Grainger and his daughter was hastily accomplished. Mrs. Grainger, always less able to show outward affection, broke down when the sweet face was raised for the farewell embrace, and she clung to the bride until another arm and another voice gently loosened and drew away the hands which would almost forcibly have detained *his wife*. Herbert and Jessie took their departure for Mossel Bay, where they intended to pass two or three weeks. The guests made merry and enlivened all in the house of their friend and host. In the

evening, Anna Garton was perhaps the gravest among the party, and Arabella Rollach unquestionably the gayest. The dancing probably caused her to become very animated, and the presence of Albert Garton made the world appear to her unusually bright.

"Amy, dear, you look weary," said Anna in the course of the evening to her sister, who was seated in a retired spot, watching with nearly closed eyes the couples who passed her.

"Yes, Anna, I am tired: are we going home soon?"

"At once, dear, if you wish; I am only staying to please Mrs. Grainger."

"Anna, I cannot help wondering why Albert did not ask Mrs. Mortimer to be his wife instead of,—you know who—for we all love Jessie better than Bella, do we not?"

"All except Albert. I daresay we shall all learn to like Arabella, and in time may love her if we try."

"Why does not some kind, grave, and clever gentleman marry you, Anna?"

"Dear, Amy, you must not make me laugh at you: what has put such ideas into your head?"

Shortly after they went home.

Miss Beyers was greatly admired for her beauty

and modest retiring manners. Miss Rollach was remarkable for her tall showy person, and Mr. Garton thought she was not the person to suit his son's disposition; Miss Beyers evinced almost repugnance to the lady, and strove to avoid coming in contact with Albert Garton.

Mr. Grainger sat a long time with the pretty Dutch girl: their conversation was chiefly upon the newly married ones; he greatly admired the black-eyed amiable Mina, whose affection for his beautiful daughter was always shown in loving praise. At last, a spruce youth advanced and eagerly requested the young lady to be his partner in the next waltz. Mr. Grainger, with rather a mirthful expression, saw them walk away; and later in the evening he saw the same young gentleman paying most devoted attention to his partner, Mina receiving it with quiet dignity. Nice little creature, thought Mr. Grainger; but, my fine fellow, you are not the one for Mina to fancy: she is too sensible, too good to throw herself away on such a dandy! I must get Jessie to help me find a more suitable person as a husband for our little favourite.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## JOYOUS GREETINGS.

THE widow—Mrs. Hopley—was truly pleased and gratified to find that Mr. Mortimer, as soon as possible after his return, was again at his old home. He had been most anxious to receive his aunt's greetings, and had, therefore, hastened to her: knowing well that her sole joy and earthly happiness were centred in himself and bride. As he went up to the house he pictured to himself the pleasure his sudden appearance would give her: and was not disappointed, for she rose quickly, and words of welcome flowed fast.

"You here already! How is Jessie?"

"Perfectly well, and longing to see her dear friends: how glad we shall be to have you at dinner!"

"I shall be delighted to go: but stay awhile and tell me of your trip."

Herbert's description was purposely spun out to gratify the heart, and satisfy the eyes of his

kind aunt and friend; nearly an hour elapsed before he was permitted to leave: Mrs. Hopley promising to follow.

Mr. Mortimer found his wife and mother-in-law joyfully exchanging greetings, and at his appearance fresh bursts of happy "welcome home," resounded through the room.

"We have felt your absence, dear Jessie, more than we expected: especially when recollecting you would not return to your parents' home."

"Dear mamma, it is still my home—the home of my childhood. Oh! here is papa!"

"My own dear child, Jessie darling, welcome back!"

Between fond kisses Mr. Grainger spoke, and wondered how he could bear his home without the child whose presence had always shed life and light in it. Jessie noticed her father's grave countenance as he looked round the room, and remarked,

"Ah! papa, you ought not to have given me away: you are now reaping the consequences."

"Naughty Jessie, to reproach me. Was I not the last to consent? I should probably have kept you altogether, had not Herbert seen you."

"You saucy papa! we gave you sufficient time to ponder the merits of the case."

"Oh! well Jessie, child, you may chat about it as cheerfully as you like, but I do not comprehend that *this* is now your *home*!"

Jessie was serious for a moment, and then, turning her bright face to her father, remarked,

"Do you forget that *I* made promises to Bertie which I now have to fulfil: and I fancy you are taking too gloomy a view of our position; we shall, I trust, see each other daily."

"Yes, my darling; I perceive that you are persuading me to banish dull care."

"I mean you to do so, dear papa, for you have now a *son*, who is, I assure you, proud of his new title. You brighten at that: I thought you only needed reminding of your fresh advantages!"

Mr. Grainger's glance at his son-in-law was an amusing compound of pride, pleasure, and annoyance. Mr. Mortimer was entertaining his mother-in-law with much liveliness of manner: now and then casting his eyes in the direction of his wife and her father: thinking that their interview was singularly serious and calm, compared with his own blithe laugh and voice, and Mrs. Grainger's cheerful bright tones. The lady herself noticed the quietness, and observed,

"You would, perhaps, be not much surprised Herbert, if you knew how much we both feel



that Jessie now actually belongs to you. Mr. Grainger is, I perceive, scarcely able to realize the fact!"

"I *do know* the value of this treasure, and cannot be surprised that you feel the loss of her presence."

Walking up gaily, Herbert addressed Mr. Grainger, drawing him away to view some curious shells; Jessie with her mother went on a tour of inspection over the house and garden. Jessie's house, furnished and replete with every desirable convenience, and carefully superintended by Mrs. Hopley, was now surveyed with critical scrutiny by Mrs. Grainger, and found suitable to her daughter's habits and tastes. Mrs. Hopley's desire to have everything in perfect order—sparing no cost—was approved by Mrs. Grainger's searching eyes and nods of satisfaction, as she walked from room to room accompanied by Jessie, in a smiling, blushing manner, as mistress.

"Your house is well arranged: I see nothing more to desire, my dear. You will, I feel sure, be quite comfortable."

"Mrs. Hopley has had everything done well. Good, kind creature that she is! I have countless other articles, gifts: both useful and ornamental; what shall I do with them all?"

"You will find out in time, Jessie. Good afternoon, Mrs. Hopley."

These words were not heard by the lady to whom they were addressed, for she saw Jessie and caught her in her arms, saying,

"Dear child, my Herbert's sweet birdie!"

"Dear Mrs. Hopley, I am much pleased and gratified by your generous forethought in making my house so bright and beautiful! I scarcely know how to thank you sufficiently." Jessie retained the hands of Mrs. Hopley as she spoke, and again warmly embraced her.

"You must know, my dear, that it gave me intense gratification to contribute to your pleasure, and you and your mamma's satisfaction is sufficient reward. Where is your dear husband?"

Jessie replied, "With papa. Come, dear, and take off your bonnet and cloak, and make yourself comfortable any where you choose."

Mrs. Hopley had indeed been liberal. She had previously informed her nephew that she would bestow, as wedding presents, the entire requisite furniture for his future home. She ordered from England every necessary article, and thoroughly good.

Mr. and Mrs. Grainger, Mrs. Hopley and Mrs. Lawson were amusing themselves with cards,

Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer were standing together a little distance off, quietly conversing.

"Dear Herbert, I am going to make a suggestion."

"My darling, pray do; I am all attention."

"Well, then, this house is very large: and Mrs. Hopley is lonely. Do you not think that it is our duty to render her life as pleasant and cheerful as we can?"

"Certainly, dear Jessie."

"Then, Herbert, I propose that we should offer to Mrs. Hopley at least two rooms here, and entreat her to live with us and share our home and its surroundings: speak, dear Bertie."

Mr. Mortimer did speak, but he was so much affected that his little wife was quite unprepared for the burst of thanks which she received.

"My darling Jessie! I cannot tell how your words have pleased me."

"Did you also wish it, dear Bertie?"

"Yes, indeed, and longed to hint it to you: yet I delayed, for I knew your warm heart would propose the plan, although I confess I hardly expected it so soon. I can scarcely refrain from going at once to tell her; but no, my wife shall do this in her own sweet fashion. But listen! that, I believe, is the bell, which announces supper."

## CHAPTER XXX.

## AN EXPLANATION.

“**D**EAR Jessie,—Both Amy and Morton have colds and coughs, I cannot leave them ; you will therefore please excuse my not being one of your guests to-night.

“ Your affectionate,

“ ANNA GARTON.”

The above note was read with much concern by Mrs. Mortimer. Six months afterwards Mr. Garton and Miss Rollach were united. The dinner-party was chiefly given to celebrate the anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer's wedding-day. Mr. and Mrs. Albert Garton were the first to arrive, and Jessie noticed that Arabella was thinner and paler than she had ever been. Albert also was not the ardent and devoted lover he used to be. The ill-matched couple wore a harassed look. Mrs. Mortimer strove to make them cheerful ; but she thought to herself, “ Has trouble come already ? ”

Mr. Garton drew a chair near his hostess, and said laconically—

“So Danvers is again in town?”

“Yes; we hope to see him here this evening.”

“He was always a great admirer of you, Mrs. Mortimer.”

“Was he? Well, I must not feign utter ignorance thereof, though I cannot say I ever felt the least inclined to return the compliment. Herbert always liked him. I daresay *we* shall now be good friends.”

“Love, they say, is blind: is it *true*? I think he was in utter ignorance of your engagement to Mortimer, while he so persistently followed in your train.”

“I am rather surprised to hear that.”

“You must have considered him very rude: why did you never hint to him your real position?”

“For this simple reason, Mr. Garton: that as our engagement was publicly known; we—at least *I*—never thought it necessary to speak to Mr. Danvers of it.”

“Let us drop the subject, Al. dear,” pleaded his wife, with a look of anxiety at her husband.

“Very good. Mrs. Mortimer, your kindness will excuse me if I have been presuming.”

Jessie bowed and smiled ; Mr. Garton rose and walked to a window. Mr. Danvers was soon after announced : his greeting to Mrs. Mortimer being dignified and graceful. He stood near her, and observed—

“It is a very great pleasure to me to know that we are all to meet again and enjoy ourselves as we did last year.”

Jessie smiled, and said—

“As a rule, Mr. Mortimer does not like dinner-parties ; but on this occasion I overruled his scruples.”

“I am one of its advocates, and quite agree with Mr. Danvers, that dinner-parties are pleasant gatherings.”

The gentleman gravely bowed to Mrs. Garton’s speech, for he did not look at *her*, and immediately spoke to Mrs. Mortimer as Arabella moved away.

“I was at Caledon when I received your wedding cards.”

Guests were now rapidly filling the room. Dinner was soon after announced : Mr. Danvers gallantly offering his arm to his hostess. After dinner the ladies in the drawing-room were indulging in coffee, chatting, and laughing. The gentlemen, some in the dining-room, others on the lawn, were smoking and talking over the opinions

of the day. Mrs. Mortimer had been prevailed upon to warble her last new song. This over, the gentlemen appeared, and distributed themselves about the room. One stepped up to Mrs. Garton, and asked for a song, but in vain. Jessie remonstrated, and Arabella remarked wearily—

“I seldom sing; but if Albert wishes me to do so, I will immediately.”

Mr. Garton shewed no sign that he had heard his wife's speech. Jessie drew her chair nearer, and tried to keep up a cheerful conversation with the distressed lady, Mrs. Albert Garton, who had been so earnest in her entreaties to Jessie to be her friend, and help her to become a better woman. She had not however sought counsel, but seemed to have shunned further intimacy. Jessie would not intrude upon her. The hour of eleven struck as the last of the guests departed, and Herbert turning to his wife said—

“You look worn out, dear Jessie. Some persons cannot be satisfied without tiring host and hostess, with endeavours to make them happy and comfortable!”

“Hush! Herbert, I am not so very tired.”

“Well—those Gartons—did they not look wretched? It gave me a cold shiver every time I happened to glance at either of them.”

"They did indeed look miserable: what can have occurred to cause this? I have heard vague reports; but *we* never credit aught but the truth."



## CHAPTER XXXI.

## AMY'S ILLNESS AND DEATH.

“**M**Y poor dear Amy, I fear you scarcely slept all last night! How does your head feel now?”

“Very weak, Anna; I cannot lie on my back. How is Morton—does he cough much?”

“Yes, Amy; but do not talk if it distresses you.”

Anna's energetic manners and ready hands were carefully adjusting pillows, etc.; but before that could be accomplished, the violent cough, so painful to her, shook the delicate girl's fragile frame, and she lay back, panting and exhausted. Anna was anxiously watching the pale countenance of her sister when Mrs. Mortimer entered, and gazed with much concern first upon Amy and then Miss Garton; but she felt unable to speak. Anna turned, and in a glad voice said—

“Good morning, dear Jessie.”

Mrs. Mortimer's embrace was most sympathetic, as she sorrowfully exclaimed—

"I am grieved to see you looking so tired, dear Anna! I would have come before this, had I been aware of your trouble. Amy, I am very sorry to see that you are so ill. Are you suffering much pain?"

"No, not now; but I feel very weak."

Anna's eyes were filled with tears when Jessie glanced up at her; and she seemed awe-struck, as if a painful thought had just come across her mind, and that of Jessie also, for she felt what the end would probably be.

"Anna, if you will allow me, I can take your place by the side of Amy, while you have a rest."

"Thank you, Jessie, I shall be glad of your kind offer for a short time."

"Please do stay with me, dear Mrs. Mortimer."

"With much pleasure, dear Amy," answered her friend, removing her hat and cloak.

Jessie remained several hours in the invalid's apartment, proving that she was a most kind and tender nurse. Anna Garton's frame, though robust, was weary with watching and waiting upon her brother and sister; but she declined her father's suggestion to obtain help from a hired nurse. In the course of the morning, Jessie requested that she might take Hetty back with her to be under

Mrs. Hopley's care. Anna soon perceived how desirable this would be, and accordingly made preparation for the child's departure from home. She at first appeared unwilling to leave her sister, but Jessie gradually drew her away, and, clasping the child's hand, she walked home calmly and thoughtfully. Mrs. Mortimer found that the charge of Hetty was pleasant to the gentle widow, and they were soon great friends. The following day prevented the possibility of venturing out of doors, for the weather was very stormy. The hot, scorching gales of wind (so peculiar to Africa during the winter months) were blowing with violence until late in the evening; clouds of dust were flying about in every direction. Doors and windows were all fastened, and, in some cases, blinds were drawn and shutters closed. All in the house experienced a most distressing feeling of thirst, which they vainly strove to allay by partaking of cooling drinks or luscious oranges. Some wander from room to room, others lie down in the darkest and coolest apartments, feigning resignation and playing at patience. This over, the evening usually sets in calm and even chilly, doors and windows are opened, and the inmates gladly leave the close atmosphere of their houses, and stroll in the garden; others saunter

far away, pleased and thankful for the agreeable change.

The next morning, soon after breakfast, Mrs. Mortimer was going in the direction of the Gartons. On her arrival there, she was not surprised to hear that the invalids were much weaker, the weather being so unpropitious for their improvement. Mrs. Mortimer noticed that Amy's face wore a most composed and peaceful expression, and she gently asked—

“Dear Amy, do you find being patient is easier than it used to be?”

“Oh, yes! I have been thinking of my dear mamma: Anna says *she* was always patient. I hope to be soon with her.”

“Before we can reach heaven, Amy, we must let patience have her perfect work.”

“Yes: I do not seem to care about anything now. I used to fret very much when I suffered; but now, I keep down.”

“Oh! dear Amy, lean against me.”

“Thank you,” said the young girl, as she grew more tranquil after a fit of coughing.

“How pleasant it is to know, Mrs. Mortimer, that sickness and pain belong not to heaven; and that with all my infirmities and sins, I shall be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. What

a wonderful assurance! As I lie here, I like to think of our Confirmation—of our first Communion also. How often I feared that I should not live to go through those services.”

“It was a beautifully solemn time, dear Amy.”

After a short silence Amy slept, and Mrs. Mortimer returned home.

The following Friday, Morton Garton died. Miss Garton sent word to Jessie during the evening; she was grieved by the tidings, and longed for the morrow, when she might soothe and Anna and Amy. Many loving offers of assistance were rendered by all who felt for their stricken, suffering friends. Mrs. Mortimer and Anna sat near the opened door of the dinning-room. Amy slept. Anna spoke first, saying, tearfully—

“Dear Jessie, I feel stunned! and yet, what can be more desirable than the best and safest place for all our dear ones? How my mother will welcome her darlings! Oh! Jessie, in the midst of gloom and sadness, God’s messenger of *Love* bids us not mourn as those who have no hope.”

“I cannot imagine, Anna, how poor weak mortals could endure to be severed, unless able to believe the promises in God’s Word that we shall *meet again*.”

Sunday morning dawned bright and sunny.

Mrs. Mortimer went early in the afternoon to see Amy.

"I quite count the hours till I see you, dear Jessie."

"How is Amy?" enquired Mrs. Mortimer.

"Passing away! It draws near, dear friend; soon I shall have only Hetty."

"She often asks for you, Anna. She has become quite fond of Mrs. Hopley. Mamma had her yesterday for a short time."

"I miss her so much, Jessie: she was seven years old last Friday. I was obliged to let the day pass unnoticed. Albert's wife came yesterday morning: she appeared far from well and happy. She seemed inclined to remain, but I would not allow this."

"I am sorry, but not at all surprised. I have for some time seen a change in her health and spirits. But I will now go and stay with Amy."

When Mrs. Mortimer gazed on Amy, she thought that her expression denoted strength, and more than usual sweetness.

"You look a little better, dear."

"Do I? Oh! Mrs. Mortimer, do not say that I am again to get well?"

The beseeching tone, and the hands uplifted

in deprecation of such an event as her restoration quite startled Mrs. Mortimer, and she said tenderly—

“Dear Amy, remember, that though it would certainly be for your own benefit to go; still we cannot wish you to leave us.”

“I understand; but I have been ill so often, I feel sure that I shall not get well again. Do not look sorry, please. I have been pondering over these texts,—‘And then we shall be ever with the Lord: therefore comfort one another with these words.’ I am so weak and tired just now, I should like to sleep a little while.”

Amy Garton lingered on, grew better, then worse. One Thursday, two more weeks having gone their weary round, Amy was dying. Mrs. Mortimer had been the whole morning with the sisters, and left for home. Towards dusk, Anna again sent for her friend, who came quickly. They both stood near Amy, who smiled, and then appeared to doze. Mr. Garton and the brothers softly quitted the room. The dark eyes grew dim and were closed, then again opened and glanced lovingly at each one near; her head fell back, and they saw that Amy was gone from them.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## A LONG STROLL.

IT was one October evening, and, though scarcely summer weather, the day had been overpoweringly hot. The evening was calm and mild. Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer started about five o'clock, bent on a long stroll. Bright wild flowers were scattered in great profusion over the fields. The grass was a deep green, shewing to advantage the beauty of all around. The sky was dark blue, not a cloud to be seen. The air was perfumed with the odour of *Avend Bloenun* and *Crocuses*.

"Clover again, Jessie! How fond you are of that flower," said Mr. Mortimer to his wife, who was picking some.

"Yes, I am; so is mamma."

"My mother used to enjoy a long ramble on a spring day. I was usually her companion. She used to repeat poetry to me as we walked.

"Can you recollect any that she quoted?"

"Yes, I will give you what I can remember.



“ ‘Through earth, as through many a beautiful spot,  
 As a poet or painter might shew ;  
 Yet, more lovely and beautiful, holy and bright,  
 To the hopes of the heart, and the spirit's glad sight,  
 Is the land that no mortal may know.

“ ‘There the crystalline stream, bursting forth from the  
 throne,  
 Flows on, and for ever will flow,  
 Its waves as they roll are with melody rife,  
 And its waters are sparkling with beauty and life,  
 In the land which no mortal may know.

“ ‘And there on its margin, with leaves ever green,  
 With its fruits healing sickness and woe,  
 The fair Tree of Life, in its glory and pride,  
 Is fed by that deep inexhaustible tide,  
 Of the land which no mortal may know.”

“Do you like the lines, Jessie?”

“Very much. Is it not a cause for thankfulness  
 that the land which as mortals we may not know,  
 shall nevertheless be ours as immortals?”

“Yes, indeed. How many in all ages have  
 written their ideas of what that land is! How apt  
 one is to take a gloomy view of what is, after all,  
 the *needs be* to all God's plans for our welfare!  
 We must now make a rapid move, for the air is  
 becoming damp, and we have a long distance to  
 go.”

Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer did not reach home until dusk. The next morning Jessie felt feverish and ill, and before noon was obliged to return to her bed where she remained a week, through a severe attack of influenza. She was sitting one morning after her husband's departure in an easy chair, still feeble and pale.

Her maid was arranging flowers, and soon after left the room. "I shall have a quiet morning, I hope."

And Mrs. Mortimer took up her Bible, and read from the book of Psalms. She grew drowsy, and resting her head on the back of her chair, soon fell asleep. Mr. Mortimer had been absent about two hours when he found it necessary to return home, on an important matter which he had neglected. He finished his business, and then walked lightly into Jessie's apartment: his entrance did not disturb her,—he therefore gazed in pleased surprise at the sleeping form so unconscious of his presence. He was roused from his reverie by a servant saying loudly, as she handed a card to him, "Please, Master, there is a lady waiting to see the mistress." Hearing voices, Mrs. Mortimer woke, and looked at her husband's smiling face, exclaiming, "Why, Bertie, is it possible that I can have been asleep

ever since you left this morning? Now, it must be one o'clock!"

"No, dear, it is not so late. I came on a matter which escaped my memory yesterday! and then I wanted to peep at you:—you look very much better for your long nap."

"I thoroughly enjoyed it, dear Bertie; but whose card have you there?"

"Mrs. Albert Garton," read Mr. Mortimer, in a tone of regret. "I am sure, Jessie, you should not see visitors of any kind until you are stronger."

"I am better, Bertie; besides, she asked me to be her friend, although since that time I have seen less of her than before. Please ask Mrs. Garton to come in here."

"Certainly I will; but are you quite sure that you will not be disturbed? She is far from being a calm and comforting companion. And you *will* see her? So it shall be then, you wilful wee woman."

Mr. Mortimer walked into the drawing-room, and to his chagrin found the lady in an unusual state of outward calmness, though her eyes were wild; he almost hesitated to grant permission for her entrance into his wife's apartment. Mrs. Garton noticed his reluctant manner, and impatiently waited, hoping Mrs. Mortimer would not

fail to send word that she was ready for her visitor.

"I hope Mrs. Mortimer is not very ill?" she at last inquired.

"No, replied Herbert, but she has been so. She is waiting to see you; but pray do not allow her to be excited. You will excuse me for making this request, for I am very anxious that she should soon be well again."

"Certainly; good morning, Mr. Mortimer."

Walking hastily past him, Mrs. Garton soon reached Jessie, and glancing round the room, she abruptly said, "I hope you mean to be alone for a short time, because I want to remain with you for an hour, if you have no objection."

"Yes, Bella, if you wish it."

"I *do* wish to stay; why could you not have said that you would have been glad to have me stay. I dare say I deserve this from you; and I am now reaping the reward of my former wild talk and behaviour. Oh! foolish and unhappy creature that I am!"

Mrs. Garton retreated from Jessie's chair, as she spoke in a frantic despairing voice, and sitting on a low chair at some distance off, she covered her face with her hands and wept hysterically. Mrs. Mortimer at first gazed in surprise, and then

became alarmed, and approached Mrs. Garton, saying, "Oh, that I knew what I could do to comfort you!"

"Please, Jessie, go back to your chair; I shall feel better after I have had a good cry. You have perhaps noticed, Jessie, that there is a reserve between Albert and myself?"

"I have, Bella," sorrowfully replied Mrs. Mortimer; "but what can I do under such circumstances?"

"Did you not promise to be my friend? I want you now to keep your promise: will you?"

"What is it that you wish me to do, Bella?"

"Hear my story first, and then prove that you are good and kind, by assisting to bring back to me the tenderness and affection which Albert holds back through an incident I wish to narrate."

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## MRS. GARTON'S COMMUNICATION.

“**I** WAS once acquainted with a Mr. Percival, and encouraged his attentions, but treated him very ill. I heard soon afterwards—which added a sting to my misery—first, that his health was not good; and then, that his mind had given way; that he was incessantly harping upon my name and my cruelty. When my father failed, we left Cape Town, and all came to this little nook of a village. I felt hard and angry with every one—with *you* in particular; for you looked so beautiful and merry, innocent of all scheming such as *I* had been accustomed to; and it pleased me greatly if I could mar your content or cloud your happiness. Now, do not shrink from me, and do not weep, or your doting husband will hate me, perhaps. I have nearly finished my miserable tale. When I first saw Albert Garton I considered him too candid and ingenuous for me; but I admired his honest, hearty speeches, so free from hypocrisy and disguise. I was

resolved he should like me. You know the rest. Unfortunately, I once led Albert into an error by an unintentional remark which I made, and he overheard. You know not how I have striven to set this all right. I have not rested properly since. Albert is unjust to me: he is cold and stern, and entirely indifferent to me. This makes me so thoroughly careless of home—to have, perhaps, my whole life marred through that unlucky speech. What shall I do? I think that death would be the next best thing to strive for.”

“Bella, *after death* comes judgment!” Mrs. Mortimer’s gentle voice caused the tears to flow afresh from Mrs. Garton’s eyes. There was silence in the chamber for some time, until Jessie exclaimed, “There is my husband! stay and lunch with us; afterwards, you can tell me what help you wish from me. Had you told Mr. Garton at first what has since come to his knowledge, things would not have been so sad as they now are. You ought to have been candid with so good and tender a husband.”

Mr. Mortimer stepped lightly into the room, not expecting to find Mrs. Garton still there; and his first remark was, “Ah, darling, alone? I am glad of that!”

“No, Bertie, not alone; Mrs. Garton is here.”

"Oh!" answered Mr. Mortimer, in an altered tone, as he gazed with surprise at Mrs. Garton; then, turning to his wife, he remarked, "This is a pleasant morning. I do wish, dear Jessie, that you were well enough to be out and enjoy it; but what about lunch? Shall I take your commands?"

"Mrs. Garton and I will have ours here, dear Bertie."

"Very well, ladies; you shall have your own way," answered Mr. Mortimer, as he proceeded to give orders, and partake of refreshment himself.

When the ladies were again alone, Mrs. Garton inquired if Jessie could help and advise her.

"Tell me, Bella, what you wish me to do for you."

Mrs. Garton looked long at her friend, and then exclaimed, "Get Albert to believe in me, and to trust me."

"Cheer up, Bella: surely Mr. Garton must indeed have altered, if he can remain long unjust and cruel! and if you do your duty and pray for assistance, I venture to say you may again be happy. You said you would try to be patient. Be forbearing with your husband, and




in time, Bella, he must notice your gentle conduct, and he will then repent: I feel sure he will."

"I think you will ultimately make something rational of me," said Mrs. Garton, as she rose, and hastily resumed her walking attire.

The rest of the day Mrs. Mortimer was unusually grave. She did not brighten up till the evening, when her husband entered, followed by Mina Beyers.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## FAREWELL TO FRIENDS.

RS. MORTIMER was playing with a sweet three months' old image of herself. The day was far from pleasant: rain had been falling in torrents all the morning, and Jessie went several times to the window, looking more and more disappointed as she contemplated the dreary face of nature. But, as she had made up her mind to do without an expected friend, she was prepared for a quiet morning with her baby. Soon afterwards she started as she heard sounds of a visitor's voice, and then the firm tread of feet along the passage and up to the very door of her room, where they paused: then came a gentle tap, which was scarcely audible, even to Jessie, who was intently listening.

"Come in, Anna," said Mrs. Mortimer, joyfully: and Miss Garton entered briskly, exclaiming,

"Dear Jessie, I was almost afraid of the weather. How are you, and dear little Amy?"

"Both well, thanks, Anna; I am so very glad you managed to come."

"I felt that I could not remain quietly at home, and determined to risk being caught in a shower—but I was not."

"Dear Anna, it seems now that you are my sister: and you must know how welcome you always are! I tremble sometimes, Anna, when I think that this little Amy will necessarily look up to me, as an example to imitate, a pattern to follow."

"Dear friend," said Anna, "there is no fear that your child will ever see you a deliberate wrong doer."

"I hope not, Anna: but we are frail mortals—sinful, even when we prefer doing right."

"This text is *my* comfort, 'As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.'"

"I am glad you recalled to my memory that beautiful promise: I will not again let it slip from my mind."

Upon Anna's next visit, she found Mrs. Mortimer in the garden; the ladies did not long remain out of doors, for the sun was overpoweringly hot. Amy was awake in her berceaunette, smiling gleefully. Miss Garton's face was graver

than usual, and her embrace more loving. Mrs. Mortimer perceived this: and remarked,

“Anna, excuse me, but I feel you are going to tell me something either disagreeable, or sad.”

“Your surmise is correct, dear Jessie: I fear my news will not give you pleasure.”

“Then tell me at once, Anna, please.”

Mrs. Mortimer spoke quietly, though her face betokened anxiety, as she watched Anna.

“Dear Jessie, do not look at me so eagerly. Since Albert’s marriage, papa has often spoken of leaving George.”

“Anna, oh, Anna! what does that mean,—that you are all going away?”

“No, dear Jessie; only papa, Hetty, and myself.”

“Oh! Anna, how shall I get on without you?”

That was all Jessie Mortimer could say, as she looked sadly at her friend.

“Dear Jessie, you may reverse that speech with safety; for how much more shall I miss your society than you will mine?”

“But, Anna, how strange to think of your leaving George. Does it grieve you much?”

“Yes, decidedly, for many reasons, Jessie.”

“Why is Sidney to remain here?”

"He and Albert will then be in partnership, dear Jessie."

"Have you any objection, Anna, to tell me the reasons which have made Mr. Garton decide on quitting George town?"

"Not at all, Jessie; papa has never been satisfied with my brother's wife: that is the first reason. The second is the loss of dear Amy: and Morton has made papa very anxious about Hetty, who has always been delicate; and thirdly, he wishes again to have a sight of his native land: and to see again the acquaintances of 'Auld lang syne.' Papa has for some time past expressed a hope of re-visiting England; consequently, I am not at all surprised that he has at last resolved upon doing so."

"When must you be ready?"

"I cannot say yet. But as papa's affairs are generally so well arranged, he could leave even to-day."

"Oh! Anna dear, I do not know how to spare you."

Anna replied gravely, "My dear friend, do not make me regret leaving more than I ought. I have but a dim recollection of my former life *there* when a mere child: yet, were it not for the anticipated pleasure of again beholding——"

"Who, dear Anna?" asked Jessie in surprise, as she saw Anna's eyes beaming.

"We received a long letter yesterday from Mrs. Wallace—who is Mr. Percival's sister. She writes that her brother is completely restored to health, and that he is staying at her house—and often alludes to us."

"Dear Anna!" joyfully cried Jessie, stretching out her arms and clasping her friend within them.

She now felt she could better endure the separation, as she contemplated the possible happy future of her friend. The silence was not of long duration, for both ladies were determined to have as much as they could of each other's company. Half an hour passed, when voices were heard: and Mr. Grainger and Mr. Mortimer entered together.

"Ah!" cried the former gentleman, spying his tiny grand-daughter. "Little pet, wide awake, eh! please hand her over to me, Jessie."

Both ladies smiled as they watched the lavish care and tenderness displayed by Mr. Grainger, as he fondled the pretty cooing infant.

Mr. Mortimer was disposed to resent the extreme quietness of the ladies, but they gradually brightened under the influence of the cheerful words and hearty laughter of the gentlemen; and, not-

withstanding that the rain poured down again, and the wind whistled mournfully outside, the party spent a pleasant hour together.

Little Amy was certainly the centre of attraction, and the general chat was of the marvels daily seen in her bright and dawning intelligence. Mr. Mortimer was inclined to murmur at his Jessie for permitting so much of her time to be monopolized by the tiny child, to the supposed neglect of himself; and this morning's visit was for the express purpose of being made much of. Mrs. Mortimer could not refrain from a mischievous smile, when, after all her father had said, she perceived that he was more than ever taken up with little Amy: totally ignoring the fact that he himself had wished to be more noticed!

Mr. Grainger offered to see Miss Garton safely home, as she was preparing to go; together therefore they quitted the house, to face the storm of wind and rain.

Mrs. Mortimer was again alone. She sat down in her cheerful apartment, ruminating upon Anna and her news. She remembered her first impressions of one, who had proved so true and tried a friend; of many instances of genuine Christian self-denial, commencing at Ballott's Bay during the fearfully stormy night, when she was half


beside herself with grief and despair. Anna's calm, trusting dependence, on her Maker's goodness and love; her gentle, soothing words of love and kindness; all came up fresh to Mrs. Mortimer's recollection: and she felt, while the tears came unbidden to her eyes, how truly she estimated and valued her friend. Anna would soon be away in England! herself in Africa, and many miles of wide, blue, restless ocean, between them!



## CHAPTER XXXV.

## ANNA'S LETTER.

LONDON, *June 18th.*

“Y dearest friend,—You have, I doubt not, received my first despatch, forwarded about a week after my arrival here. I can scarcely yet describe my feelings, or realise the fact of my actually being again in the land of my birth. I often told you how indistinct were the remembrances of my childhood's home; and now I cannot summon up any certain ideas. As we this morning wandered about the city, and drove round its suburbs, I vainly tried to persuade myself of the veritable distance which now divides us; but, when I returned to the hotel and drew out my desk, with the desire of telling you some of our experiences and feelings, I immediately comprehended what a weary and long journey my letter must travel, ere *you* could peruse its contents. Dear Jessie, how shall I thank you for your persevering efforts on behalf of Albert and his wife! Their last letters speak in no

measured terms of your goodness. You must accept, though I imperfectly convey them to you, my warmest thanks. Papa did not express any surprise that a reconciliation had taken place, but simply said, 'I thought *she* would be the one to bring it about! I asked papa if he thought *I* should ever have been able to make peace between my brother and his wife.' He replied very gravely, 'No, Anna; your heart never warmed to your brother's wife: I do not wonder at it!' I will never again allow my heart to grow cold and indifferent to any human being, for I am quite grieved to think how puzzled, and perhaps even sorrowful, Bella may sometimes have become at my persistent coolness to her. I will write, and beg her to forget the past, and to strive to love me, as I shall soon, I trust, to love her. I mean to note down every occurrence that I fancy may interest you, and also the dates. Dear little Hetty is thoroughly enjoying our roving life, and papa spares neither time nor trouble to give us daily treats. Our relatives reside in different parts of England. We have only visited my mother's brother, who, with his wife and charming children, is at present in town. My aunt is a quiet uncommunicative person, very pleasing, and a gentlewoman in every respect. The children

are healthy and blooming, presenting a remarkable contrast to our pale and yellow complexions.

“19th. Another bright morning! I find all is not so serene as it appears at my uncle’s; he told papa that he is going to reduce his establishment and live more secludedly. I have a great desire to know more of this uncle, who appears to be so genial and hospitable. Papa means to accept an invitation to his eldest brother’s house, and on Tuesday or Wednesday next we shall leave this for Brixton.

“30th. We reached this pretty place two days ago, and we are made so heartily welcome, our reception was so joyous and pleasant, that I could scarcely refrain from shedding tears. It is awkward to go as a stranger among strangers. My nervous feeling completely vanished at the sound of the cheerful voices of this affectionate family. Last evening, my aunt spoke of a dear friend whom she is confident I shall approve and welcome. Upon asking her name, I found it to be a Mrs. Wallace. I knew of course that there might be more than one of that name, still, I instantly jumped to the conclusion that *this* Mrs. Wallace was papa’s correspondent, Mr. Percival’s sister. I therefore merely asked if she were a resident in Brixton? My aunt quickly replied, ‘No, dear,

she has been here several weeks with an invalid child ; her brother has now joined her, meaning to remain and enjoy this lovely weather for a short time. He is a very intelligent and noble-looking man, but does not seek much society : my friend calls her brother 'Howard.' I smiled. Can you imagine my feelings of surprise and pleasure combined, at the knowledge that Mr. Percival was actually so near to me ? I sometimes wonder, Jessie, at my own want of calmness, notwithstanding that I go by the soubriquet of 'The old Maid.'

"July 4th. I will no longer postpone the news which I am confident you are eager to know. We have met at last ! He is not so much altered as I pictured to myself he would be. Our meeting was sober, grave, serious, and unsentimental. I asked myself as he drew a chair near to me, Has Mr. Percival really banished all affection from his heart, and does he intend to be a stern and confirmed 'bachelor' ? But, dear Jessie, after a long and pleasant chat together, I have, to my joy, you may be sure, recovered from the uncomfortable and blank feeling with which his manners had at first impressed me, and though he is altered, I can now affirm that his sufferings have neither endangered his head nor his heart. He talks like one who has come unscathed from

much that was hurtful to him. I wish so earnestly that you knew him. He confessed that when in Africa he was not walking humbly and consistently, but since that time he has become convinced how much wiser are those persons who live under a deep sense of their own weakness, and depend upon Divine strength and guidance.

“5th. Well, dear Jessie, I was too weary last night to write much. We have been calling upon Mrs. Wallace, and spent a most agreeable morning, chiefly in the garden—papa walking with Mrs. Wallace, Mr. Percival with me. I am sure you would love Mrs. Wallace, she attracts all who meet with her. You will not expect me to write down our conversations. I must not make my letters too long, or your pet, Amy, may object to your being too deeply engaged with any thing but herself. How very curious at this time of year is the extreme cold of winter at the Cape! *here* we are luxuriating in warm bright sunny weather, and wearing light garments, but *you* are clad in warm stuffs. The gardens here are glowing in beauty, and the air is delightful. At George you have leafless trees and no sweet flowers, or very few, and perhaps a damp, dreary atmosphere. We are all going to a pic-nic to-morrow, therefore as the mail closes early I will finish at once and

seal my letter. I am hoping to receive one from you, Jessie; soon may it gladden my eyes. I trust that all is well with you, your husband and your precious baby. My kind regards to Mr. and Mrs. Grainger and Mr. Mortimer.

“With fond love to yourself,

“I remain,

“Your attached friend,

“ANNA GARTON.”

Many portions of the above were re-perused by Mrs. Mortimer; her face wore a joyous expression, just as her husband entered, who smilingly exclaimed,—

“Why, Jessie, you are looking precisely as I would have liked to see you, when reading a note from me! What does that letter contain, to please you so immensely?”

“This is a long letter from England, dear Bertie, and I am indeed delighted with the news from Anna Garton.”

“I am glad of that, Jessie: what in particular?”

“We must go to the table first, Herbert, for mamma has sent something which she knows we relish, and it is cooling.”

“Ah! that is splendid,” Herbert remarked as

the cover was removed; but you have made me very inquisitive to hear what Miss Garton has written. I am going to listen, my dear wife, while you read as much as you like from Miss Garton's packet."

Jessie's happy voice soon related the tidings, with which Mr. Mortimer was highly gratified, and declared that he felt as much pleased as if he were rejoicing over the possible happiness of a dear sister. He forgot the flight of time, and chatted full half-an-hour beyond the limit he daily allowed himself. When he at length rose, Mr. Mortimer with some emotion said, as he placed his arm round his wife, and gazed upon her animated features,

"How much of joy and love, of beauty, and of pleasure, and countless mercies are mine!"

My darling, you have helped, and are still aiding me to see and feel, that I owe all to a Power above, to a Divine Giver and Sovereign. *I* now can also gladly "Rejoice with those who rejoice," and I trust feel for, "and weep with those who weep."



LONDON :  
WILLIAM MACINTOSH,  
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